

4th Sunday of Advent
December 19, 2021
“Technology or God?”

Mic 5:1-4
Heb 10:5-10
Lk 1:39-45

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Our world has turned into a time of almost total technology. The internet has brought near what was, formerly, far away. It has made instantaneous, what, before, took time and waiting. It has made possible many new and wonderful things.

However, in many ways, the internet has dehumanized us. Children have been damaged by it in serious ways – People go for a walk in the great outdoors glued to their cell phones – People send damaging text messages they wish they never had sent – And even the best of Skype or Zoom can never be the same as “in person” communication.

Usually, when we actively engage another in person, we can read and interpret their emotions. And being able to read those emotions does much to further better communication, understanding, and appreciation.

However, the worst part of all the E and G Mails is that we no longer make time for God. Our addiction leaves little time or interest for things of the spirit. And unless there is some quiet and stillness in our lives and hearts, we will not be able to hear God when He speaks to us.

Unfortunately, if we don't listen to God and make quiet time for Him, we are at a great risk for failure. For, in all likelihood, we will fail as a human being, and we will fail to discern the real purpose of our unique and personal life on this Earth! If we can't hear God in our soul, then we won't see His will and providence in so many things that occur or in the hardships that no one can escape!

The Book of Micah was written 800 years before the time of Jesus. The Chosen People were experiencing unrest and uncertainty because of the warring, powerful nations around them. But they had also become corrupt. Their religious and political leaders had compromised with the nations around them. They did nothing to stem the religious unfaithfulness of the common folk. Pagan rites and worship became part of the true religious worship of the Lord God who had chosen and blessed them.

As a result, Micah devoted most of his Book foretelling the gloom and doom that would befall the Chosen People. They would get their just desserts. However, in today's scripture passage, he held out hope for the faithful few. Micah speaks of a time and a place, wherein God would rule, universally, with power, justice, and peace. All this would happen through the one whom God would send into the world. And this salvation would extend to the ends of the Earth! Fortunately, the prophet was able to hear and share the message of God – And the attentive and faithful few kept hope alive over the centuries, until Jesus came!

In the Gospel of Luke, Mary was always someone who listened to God. Her cousin, Elizabeth, listened as well. But, what is remarkable, is that the unborn, John, would sense the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary. For we are told that John leaped for joy in his own confined space! Somehow the soul and spirit of John knew and communed with the soul and spirit of Jesus himself! I dare say, what took place between John and Jesus could never have happened if technology had been in the way!

Those who have authentic faith realize that there is another dimension besides space and time, as we know and experience them. There is a realm – a world, really – of the spirit that is the medium for soulful communication. Moreover, this energy – our soulfulness – can and does spill over into our physical presence. It is often reflected in our appearance, as well as in our emotional life – Because our emotional life is the overflow of what is in our soul and spirit!

The author of the Book of Hebrews teaches us that God wants far more from us than perfunctory religious practice. Certainly, we must pray. We must attend the Eucharist. But these things can become mere routine. Our hearts must be open to God. Our hearts must be attuned to God. Furthermore, in all that we do, we must seek the will of God as Jesus did throughout his life. “What does God want from me in this moment – or in this hour, or day, or week, or month, or year?” “How can I be a better sign of God's presence in the world?”

What is truly wonderful, is that we can be this sign whenever we do what is good and fair and right and just. Sadly, it can't happen when we allow our addiction to technology isolate us. That addiction can keep us from taking the time to be open to God – and open to whomever is before us.

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us pray for God's grace and power
in every aspect of our life.

Let us seek the face of the Lord, our God, and His will for us in every moment.
And let us understand that Christmas is one of the wonderful ways that God speaks to us
through Jesus, the Son!

Amen.

December 19, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra