

6th Ordinary Sunday
February 17, 2019
“Life with God – or Death?”

Jer 17:5-8

1Cor 15:12...20

Lk 6:17...26

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the tragic facts about modern America is the number of people who commit suicide each year. Moreover, there has been an increasing number of suicides over the past few years. In 2016 there were 44,965 recorded suicides. This was up from 42,733 in 2014. 47,173 people took their own life in 2017, which makes suicide the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. That’s one every 12 minutes! Moreover, the estimated attempts are far higher: almost 1.2 million attempts in 2017 alone!

There are many reasons put forth for the suicide rate. However, what is never discussed is the lack of spirituality – or the lack of a relationship with God as a contributing factor.

It can be argued that living a life without God is probably not worth living at all, because life is just too hard. No matter who we are, life will always become seemingly unbearable at some point. Even those with wealth, power, good health, friendship, and strong family bonds of love – will, at some point, lose what they have. And then, what do they do without a life with God?

On the other hand, there are millions who do not have these things and who suffer intensely, but who would never take their life. For they know and understand that there is far more to life than our experience here!

All the readings for today speak to this issue. Both Jeremiah and Jesus have strong words of advice and warning for all of us and for all of the world.

Jeremiah tells us that we are cursed if we trust only in the material world and what it provides for us. Even the longest life will end in death. Moreover, there is nothing material that can prevent our death – or that we can take with us when we die. And sooner or later, our very hearts and souls will wither and be empty – because only the divine can heal, nourish, sustain, fill, and fulfill them!

However, the one who trusts in God, and who hopes in God, will live a rich and abundant life of the spirit even here. This will overflow into their external, outward life. It will sustain them even when they face things which would lead others to end their life!

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us that we must all become poor before God. We are nothing without God. We would have nothing without God. Indeed, the most fortunate among us is truly bereft without a relationship with God! No matter what blessings we enjoy – they are nothing unless we acknowledge that without God they are worthless in themselves. Moreover, without God, our life here has no meaning and no future beyond the grave!

For this reason, Jesus tells us that we are blessed if we are poor, deprived in any way, experience sorrow, or suffer because of our beliefs and our relationship with him – Because, actually, we are rich in God and in the kingdom of the spirit which we will inherit in its fullness after our life here is over!

Unfortunately, however, those who have so much without having God are doomed to eternal disappointment and emptiness! For they did not discover or acknowledge the Lord God behind all that they thought was theirs – And they did far too little for anyone but themselves!

Finally, St. Paul reminds us that the Resurrection of Jesus is the validation for all that he said and did during his short time here. Moreover, if we live with Jesus and trust in him, we have every reason to hope. For God will raise us up just as He raised up Jesus to be with Him forever in the Kingdom of His eternal life and love!

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is the Divine Word that God spoke on our behalf. That Word took our humanity upon Himself and taught us how to live and how to die. Jesus accepted all that life entails here to give us an example to follow. In all that he did – he remained open to the call and the will of his Father. He embraced pain, suffering, and death as the necessary way to eternal life! Moreover, Jesus never considered the possibility of ending his life sooner to escape all that he had to endure!

So, let us pray, that we will always walk with Jesus through our life here, through death itself, and into all that God has prepared for those who have a relationship with Him!

Amen.

February 17, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra