

20th Ordinary Sunday
August 14, 2022
“Choosing God’s Truth, Goodness, and Beauty”

Jer 38:4-10
Heb 12:1-4
Lk 12:49-53

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

There can be no doubt that there is a great division in America. Our leaders are divided – There is great economic inequality – There are the very rich who have most of the power – and the millions who have so much less and little, if any, power at all! There is also a great divide between those who seek authentic truth, goodness, and beauty – and those who have substituted caricatures of these things in their lives!

Three Supreme Court decisions in late June have brought this division into bold relief. Abortion is not a Constitutional right – Private prayer in public is a right – And people have a right to weapons for self-defense.

The underlying problem is that our nation, as a whole, no longer worships – or even believes – in God! Yet, without God, the human soul quickly loses its way – Because God is the ultimate source of truth, goodness, and beauty. And, without God, truth is replaced with falsehood, deception, and lies – goodness, by evil in its many forms – and beauty, by the ugly and the grotesque!

Believing Christians are, indeed, fortunate to have the revelation of God’s truth, goodness, and beauty as part of their heritage – Because God is absolute Truth, Goodness, and Beauty!

4000 years ago, God began to reveal Himself in what has been handed down as the Old Testament scriptures. 2000 years ago, God sent His Son into the world to reveal God’s love for every person who is created. That Son, as Jesus, gave his human life as proof of God’s loving plan for us. And God’s Holy Spirit continues to guide and assist us in knowing truth, seeking goodness, and reveling in the wonder of beauty!

Living in a divided nation will probably become more difficult in the days and years ahead. Those without a clear vision of truth, goodness, and beauty will, likely, confront us and challenge us – Because we live and work in the larger community as neighbors, associates, friends, and family members. Consequently, each of us must ask for God’s guidance as we try to live as Christ’s disciples in our divided society.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells us that his mission is to set the world on fire. Jesus came to unleash the Holy Spirit upon a world under the power of Satan and sin. And that fire will cause division – For the Spirit’s fire makes clear what is truth, goodness, and beauty to those who will accept Him!

Unfortunately, the human heart can become hardened by selfishness and sin. God’s grace is always abundant and overflowing – but we must accept it. This means that we must, continually, repent of things our growing awareness discovers about ourselves! For with the Spirit’s grace, we see more clearly the wrongs we have done and the sins we have committed. We will also meet with resistance from friends, family, and loved ones when we make those changes they cannot – or refuse – to understand!

In the Old Testament scripture, the king knew that Jeremiah spoke the truth from God. But he succumbed to political pressure and allowed Jeremiah to be condemned. However, when faced with the truth of his sin and his compromise, he had Jeremiah rescued. Moreover, all that Jeremiah predicted came to pass. The nation was destroyed; the Temple, reduced to rubble and the people, exiled!

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews encourages us. He urges us to be undaunted in our commitment and faithful to all that God has revealed. Things in our world might become a whole lot worse than they are today. It’s never easy to go against a culture that has become corrupted and bankrupt. Furthermore, there is always some “little” compromise we will be tempted to make.

But “a great cloud of witnesses” has gone before us. They were faithful to God’s truth, goodness, and beauty. Many of them even gave up their lives rather than give in to what their culture demanded.

Brothers and Sisters, truly, it can be a struggle each day to live the Gospel of Jesus. So, let us pray that we never harden ourselves against God’s grace – May we always choose God’s truth, goodness, and beauty – And may the fire of the Holy Spirit’s love direct us and sustain us at every moment!

Amen.

August 14, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra