

Homily - Year 6 C - February 17, 2019

What an amazing strange scene in this week's scripture readings. Jesus blesses the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and those who are insulted, despised, and hated. How can he do that? How can he bless those people that we believe are the lowest of the low. Then, to add insult to injury, Jesus curses the rich and those seemingly satisfied with the world's goods.

Basically, Jesus' message differentiates itself from that of the world in many dimensions. The world tells us that we are like a box of tissues - disposable. The world insists that we are like an old paper cup - recyclable. The world tells us that we are like a spare part - expendable. Jesus' response to all of that is "Be glad and rejoice, your reward in heaven will be great."

The Christian world view, the Jesus' world view teaches our importance for many reasons. First and foremost, our importance is based on the fact that we are created in God's image. Think of the importance attached to that statement. We are created in the image of God. Likewise we believe that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. The image of God and the temple of the Holy Spirit don't depend on our social status or our financial worth. Rather, as image of God and temple of the Holy Spirit, we must see the world as God sees it.

Unfortunately, we find that so many have put to one side this fundamental scriptural value that gives meaning to human life. So often, we have sought meaning in possessions, athletics, prestige, authority, all of which are not bad in themselves, but all of which tend to take control of our lives and lead us to forget the fundamental truth. In fact, many no longer recognize that they are creatures in the image of God, but act rather as if God should be the image of themselves - a total reversal from what is taught in scripture.

Jesus' teaching in today's gospel and Jeremiah's exhortation in the first reading are clear. If we replace God's vision of the world with our vision of the world, we will fill our lives with woes and curses. In the words of Jeremiah: "Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings."

Being a Catholic and being a faithful disciple of Jesus mean that our world perspective must be different from what is promoted on television shows, especially some of the talk programs where participants basically share their ignorance, different from what is taught in many textbooks in which the contributions to society of the Catholic Church over the centuries have been completely expunged, different from what our

politicians promote especially when they encourage and endorse legislation that will destroy human life right up to the moment of birth, different from what our sports leaders expect especially when athletics have replaced Sunday worship.

There is a fundamental truth that some have never heard and others have forgotten. To the question: “Why did God make you?” The answer: “God made me to know, love, and serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in heaven.” It’s as simple as that. We look in so many places to find the meaning of life. We pretend that we have found happiness, only to discover how easily that happiness disappears.

We form part of God’s vision of the world because we are made in his image. St. Augustine said it best: “Trust the past to God’s mercy, the present to his love, and the future to his providence.” And to that, I say, AMEN.