

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

February 13, 2011

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Good morning. This is my type of Gospel can you tell? Years ago when I was in Rome in 1990 for the Worldwide Retreat for Priests there were 6,000 or 9,000 priests, I can't remember. It filled the whole audience hall for the Holy Father. Pope John Paul, the Great was still alive then. Mother Theresa was there. I was reflecting on this the other day as I was preparing for this homily. A lot of my whole theology has developed because of that one conference. It was five days in Rome. It set off the decade of evangelization. The whole point was to evangelize. One of the speakers there was Sr. Bridge McKenna. Now Sr. Bridge McKenna is a very holy nun. She is still alive by God's grace and she has great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. She spends four hours every day no matter where she is in the world if they are going to fly her in to talk they must promise her she gets four hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Nowadays she deals with mostly with Bishops and priests. But in those days she would go around the world she always did her four hours before the Blessed Sacrament and she would bring out with the priests the Blessed Sacrament. And thousands of miracles of healing occurred through her intercession and through her prayers, but all through the power of God.

One of the things this very holy nun from Ireland, a great lady who has healed herself in her younger life, she wrote a book called 'Miracles do Happen.' It is a great book. I encourage you to get it by Sr. Bridge McKenna. Her she is and she is talking to us priests and she is setting us up as all good speakers do. She says, "Oh Fathers you are so holy. Who am I to even speak to you priests? Oh my. Oh Father's you do all of these holy things. Oh my. How good you are." But she says, "Father's, where is your heart before the God of the Universe? Fathers are your hearts filled with lust? Fathers are your heart filled envy? Fathers are your heart filled with anger? Fathers are your heart filled with resentment?" She kept going and listing her points one after another, after another, after another. As I told you before in that whole audience where there were 6,000 or 9,000 priests, everyone's head started to drop. Boom, boom, boom because she was killing us ever so gently, but she was killing us. She was calling forth what was in our hearts.

This is what Jesus is doing this day. Here are these people who think they are righteous because they don't do these other things like other people do. It is kind of like coming into a crowd today and saying none of you commits adultery. OOOHHH! Oh, none of you get angry or have killed anybody. OOOHHH! Oh none of you had an abortion or helped someone have an abortion. OOOHHH! You think you are pretty good don't you. And you say yes as a matter of fact I do compared to those other pagans. I am here. I go to church at St. Joseph Church – Bread of Life Community. The pastor is a nut. I go there every week. Yeah, I am pretty good. Absolutely! And Jesus looks at you and me and says, "What about your heart? What is going on in your heart?" Now again the two things that Jesus deals with are the things that I always deal with when it comes to men. If you got to see me this past week on 'Bookmark' they asked about something in my book and it is something I talk about a lot at Men's Conferences. I will be in Charlotte this coming weekend coming up and I will talk about the same thing. The two great sins of

all men are anger and lust. But it is not just men. Women have the same thing. That is why Christ talks about it. Women are usually more passive, aggressive about it. I would rather take aggressive any day than passive, aggressive let me give you a hint. Please, yell at me, scream at me, tell me I am no good. Don't just sit there and go hmpph. So whatever it is everybody has these two things inside of them whether we do it aggressively or passive, aggressively we have these things in our hearts. See this is what is important. These sins that are private sins all affect the community. They affect everybody. If you and I have anger in our heart and I don't know anything about this particular sin myself, but those of you who struggle with it yourselves inside of you it is putting a divider between you and the community. Community in the Church, community in your family you know when a husband or wife are mad at their spouse in their heart. "What is wrong?" "Oh nothing." There is division there. It creates division. These things inside of all of us that we struggle with, this anger and this lust is what Jesus is talking about.

What we have got to do deal with that is first of all acknowledge it, admit it and let God heal it. When a person asks if you are angry about something and you say no, that is a lie. So you have got to admit it. As I have talked about before anger by definition and so with lust, is a symptom of something much deeper. It is usually not the problem in itself. Anger when people deal with anger the reason they are dealing with anger because as I have talked about before is they are usually afraid of something or they are hurt by something. And they express it and they protect themselves by the use of their anger. You can tell a person to stop being angry and make them more angry or you can say, "What are you afraid of?" Or "What are you hurting about?" Then you dismiss the anger because the anger will go away. It is the same with us individually when we come before God. The first thing we have got to do is acknowledge that and let Jesus heal that and confess that. You have got to confess that. When you and I do that we take responsibility we can let God bring healing to the anger in our hearts.

Lust is not just is not just sexual lust. But there is lust for power. There is lust for prestige. There is lust for wanting things, materialism. There is a lot of that. The problem with that of course is fear because I might have nothing or as Hebrews talks about that fear of death. Because of the fear of death, because we don't want to deny ourselves to have something what do we do? We lust after things and we try to comfort ourselves to take away the fear of having nothing. And again the Hebrew author says those people who the devil keeps in slavery because of fear of death the devil keeps us in slavery our whole life long. So a person that is in lust is a person who is in slavery. And again we don't get mad at people that are in slavery, we try to set them free. My favorite story and I just love this story is the story in the Great Divorce by C. S. Lewis. Here is a man who has lust. And women have lust too I have heard confessions for 23 years I know about the women and their lust. So this guy has this demon of lust on his shoulder and he is crying out to God, "God, God please help me, help me. I can't take this demon of lust." So God sends an angel. And the angel says, "What is the problem?" He said, "It is this demon of lust. I can't stand it. It makes me do these horrible things. I hate it. I hate myself because of this demon." And the angel looks at him and says, "May I kill it?" And the man says, "Oh I don't know if you want to kill it. Maybe you could just wound it a little bit. Or take the chain it has around my neck. Maybe you could just do something like that." And the angel looks at him and says, "May I kill it?" And the guy says, "Oh that is not very politically correct you know to kill things nowadays. Maybe you could just do this." And the angel says, "May I kill it?" And finally the man says, "Yes, yes, yes. Kill it!" And the angel reaches

out and he takes that demon of lust and he crushes it and he kills it. And the demon is transformed into a beautiful white stallion. The man jumps on the stallion and the stallion takes him home to heaven.

If you and I are going to deal with our anger and our lust whatever that happens to be, we need to give God permission to kill it. "Lord I have had this in my life, my whole life." Or "Lord I like this." We all have got to admit we like our anger, we like our lust because it does something for us. So what happens is when we come before the Lord every Sunday and He looks at you and says, "Yes you have struggled again this week. Are you finally going to let me kill it?" And what are you going to say? "Oh, I don't know Lord. I don't know. I kind of like it." Or we make our excuses. "I am like this way because of my dad." Very nice. If you are like this because of somebody else then God can't do anything for you because it is not your fault. You and I today have to look at the Lord and say, "Lord, I give you permission to kill it forever." And when you give Him permission then He can do something. You got it? You get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.