

Second Sunday of Lent

February 28, 2010

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Good morning. Today in the Gospel we reflect on what Jesus did and how that affects our lives and how the Apostles lives affects our lives. There is a lot of course going on today in the Gospel. First Jesus took the Apostles with Him to pray. So He took the Church on earth with Him. He took the Apostles who always represent all of us and He takes them with Him to pray. And so does Christ do that with us. That we not only pray to Him but we pray with Him. Notice when Jesus went to pray as we get the image that we get to see what's happening as Christ is praying, Christ is praying not alone but in communion with who? The Saints. Here it is for people who don't really believe in the communion of Saints or think that we don't have any right to be praying with Saints and you know we say these Saint prayers and I just go right to Jesus. Well isn't it interesting that Jesus who is God when He prayed, prayed along with the two Old Testament saints – Moses and Elijah which theologically again means the prophets and the law and He is the fulfillment of all of that. But you have to also see what is going on. Here is Christ who teaches us how to pray, who doesn't pray alone. Well sometimes He prayed alone when we look at other parts of scripture but here in this one particular place He is praying with communion of saints and praying with the people on earth – all happening at the same time. And while He was praying and talking with each other, and they did, then God spoke to Jesus and He not only spoke to Jesus, because to speak to Jesus is to speak to us, and He said, "This is My chosen one." He tells the Apostles. And then what does He say to them, "Listen to Him."

If only that would be the number one thing we could do. This past week when I was down in, it was a very busy week for me. I was down in San Diego and I preached at the Men's Conference down there in two other parishes and then I went over to another part of Las Vegas and got into a big fight with a friend of mine. Wasn't pretty. And then I came back and took the red eye all night. Came back on Friday, took a shower, got in the car and drove up to Syracuse in the snow. Wasn't pretty. Then I talk to these guys the first speaker, wasn't pretty, and then I came back drove in last night through the snow. UGH! So when I am on the road like that I do a lot of talking. But it is also a lot of time to be listening, a lot of time to be praying. When I am in the car I usually for like the 4 whole hours up and 4 hours back or 5, it took both times, I keep the radio off. It is a time for me to pray. It is a time for me to go through all these things you know and all this stuff and where are you calling me Lord? Where are you calling us Lord as a parish? What are You doing? What do You want of me? And then it is a long time to keep silent. So you have got to hear something. The reality is that in our lives whatever we do, whatever kind of ministry you do, we have got to make sure that, like for me, that I am not listening to people opinions. Because people's opinions, it is like everyone has one. But so what? I am not listening to what the world says because boy the world sure has an opinion, doesn't it? About how to live, live for number one, no one is going to take care of you. You have got to take care of yourself. So I sure don't want to listen to the world. I sure don't want to listen to the flesh because our flesh of course tells us all these things that it thinks it needs. And sometimes we are paying attention to our flesh and thinking I have got to take care of me and I have got to make sure that my body is okay. And I have got to make sure that I am getting my desires fulfilled and my flesh. And again as we hear today that this flesh is going to be gone one day because in the second reading the first line was what, does anybody remember? "Our citizenship is in heaven, not here." So when I just listen to my flesh then I keep focused of course on here and what I need now and I am not focusing on what good for my eternal life. I am only focusing on what is good for

me at this moment - if I am hungry; if I am thirsty; if I have some desires and I am trying to fulfill them, so if I stay focused on my flesh. So I can't listen to the opinions of others, I can't listen to the world, I can't listen to my flesh so I have got to listen to God. All of us have got to do that. We have got to make sure that we have the Holy Spirit and that is why I have talked a thousand times about this daily surrender to God's Spirit. Daily surrender to God's Spirit so that why – so that we can have that gift of discernment to figure out what is the opinion of the flesh. What is the opinion of the world? What is coming from my flesh and what is coming from God?

God just told you and me one thing today – listen to Jesus. Listen to Jesus. Listen to Jesus. And if that is the one thing that God the Father is telling you and I today to listen to Jesus, with the communion of course; with the communion of saints, of course. But we have to keep focused on listening to Jesus and the only way that will happen for you and me is when you and I are silent in His presence however way that is going to happen people. Whether you are one of those people who are in a car a lot, again this Friday I am going to be in a car on Friday, give a talk in Columbus, drive back here Saturday, going to have Mass here in the morning, do a baptism in the afternoon, get on a plane and go out to Sacramento California, do another Parish Mission, then I am going to come and back and give a talk in Akron. It is going to be busy, but it will give me a lot of time to pray and that should scare you in some ways because I always come back and hmmm, a lot of time to read, a lot of time to digest these things. But all of us together with one another we have got to be praying and listening to Jesus and say Jesus where are You calling us to? One of the biggest things I am absolutely convinced after I have been to all of these parishes and that is that God is not calling any of us to complacency. He is not calling any of us to keep the status quo of where we are. He is calling all of us to the next level to be people who really worship Him in spirit and truth. To be people that are really going to start evangelizing. To be people that Jesus when we really listen to Him when He says go and make disciples of all nations, that that is what He means. We cannot just come here as a people, sit here with one another and be complacent.

The Lord is calling each of us to go forth and to grow and to evangelize and to do a lot of things. Oh what happens when I pray! And what happens when you should be praying. I can promise you He does not want any of us to stay complacent. He doesn't want any of us to stay at the status quo. He wants all of us to be grown. If we are listening to Him, He is going to stretch us in ways in these next month's that we have not been use to being stretched. But, if we are listening to Him, He will be faithful to us if we are faithful to Him. We do it together; we do it with the communion of Saints; and we listen to Jesus.

So my question is going to be, are you willing to do this with me, because we need to do it. It is going to stretch all of us. The next level is going to be a stretching level. And the next level is going to be very exciting if we are listening to Christ. We are not listening to opinions. We are not listening to the flesh. We are not listening to the world. We are only listening to Jesus and what He does and what He teaches us will always lead us to us life and will always lead us to love even if it hurts a little. And it will.

May each of us know His love today and forever, amen.