

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

Thursday, September 9, 2020

-- Thursday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

Fr. Sherdel's Morning Mass Intention: Carmine Taglieri

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1-7, 11-13

Brothers and sisters: Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up. If anyone supposes he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him.

So about the eating of meat sacrificed to idols: we know that *there is no idol in the world*, and that *there is no God but one*. Indeed, even though there are so-called gods in heaven and on earth (there are, to be sure, many “gods” and many “lords”), yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all things are and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and through whom we exist.

But not all have this knowledge. There are some who have been so used to idolatry up until now that, when they eat meat sacrificed to idols, their conscience, which is weak, is defiled.

Thus, through your knowledge, the weak person is brought to destruction, the brother for whom Christ died. When you sin in this way against your brothers and wound their consciences, weak as they are, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause my brother to sin.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 139:1-3, 13-14, 23-24

Guide me, Lord, along the everlasting way.

O Lord, you have probed me and you know me;

you know when I sit and when I stand;

you understand my thoughts from afar.

My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,
with all my ways you are familiar. ***R/.***

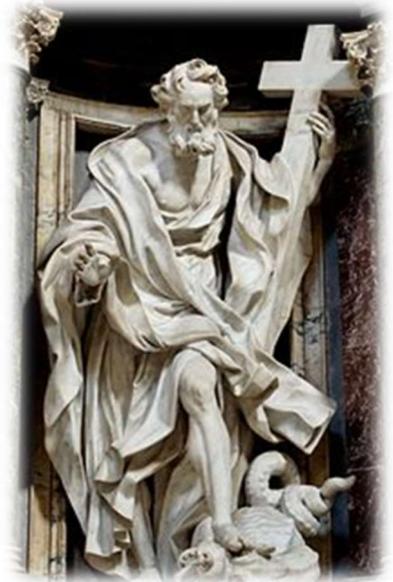
Truly you have formed my inmost being;

you knit me in my mother's womb.

I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made;

wonderful are your works. ***R/.***

Probe me, O God, and know my heart;



try me, and know my thoughts;
See if my way is crooked,
and lead me in the way of old. *R/.*

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Reflection

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. (Luke 6:27)

Have you ever noticed how many action films focus on a hero overcoming a villain? For most of the movie, the hero suffers at the hands of the villain. Then, in the last act, the hero confronts him, and the villain gets what’s coming to him — maybe in a shoot-out or in hand-to-hand combat.

Now, imagine a different ending. Instead of killing the villain, the hero calls the police. As they are about to haul the villain away, the hero embraces his enemy and speaks words of mercy. He commits to visiting the villain in jail regularly and helping his family.

It’s too bad more movies don’t end this way. But that’s probably because filmmakers understand our human nature too well. We seem to be “wired” for getting even. If someone hurts us, our instinctive reaction is to want to hurt them back. So how on earth can we love our enemies as Jesus asks us to?

The truth is we can’t do it on our own. We can only do it by receiving Jesus’ grace to help us follow his example. We can do it only by fixing our eyes on the cross and recalling how Jesus loved even the people who hurt him. He bore the criticism and condemnation of the religious leaders. He suffered the worst death imaginable — at the hands of the people he came to save! The mercy Jesus poured out can melt our hearts and inspire us to show mercy.

That doesn’t make it easy, of course. You can struggle a long time to let go of past hurts or to reconcile with current enemies. But you can ask the Holy Spirit to soften your heart and then take one step forward. Try bringing to mind someone you have trouble forgiving. Then picture Jesus on the cross and, standing underneath, you and the person you’re trying to forgive. You know that Jesus would have died just for that person alone — and for you. Ask him to give you his merciful heart for

the one who has wounded you. Even if you don't feel anything, you have started down the road to forgiveness.

Jesus, help me to forgive from the heart and to love those who are hardest to love.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.