

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost 13 August 2017

“...for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.” Lk. 18: 14

Today’s Liturgy reminds us of the incredible working of the Holy Spirit in the early Church. Last Sunday, we saw the Fall of Jerusalem just as Jesus had prophesied *“not a stone shall be left upon a stone.”* (Mt. 24:2) It was confirmation that the Old Testament had ended and that the New Testament was the beginning of God’s Kingdom on earth. We see this working of the Holy Spirit in the early Church in today’s Epistle, *I Corinthians* 12:2-11, where St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have been freed from the darkness of idolatry and have been given the gifts of the Holy Spirit in abundance. These superabundant gifts were necessary to convince the pagan Gentiles of the truth of Christianity. In a veiled way, we see the same truth in today’s Gospel where Jesus tells *The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican*. The Pharisee represents the Jew (of the Old Testament) who is self-righteous and arrogant to the tax collector who in his humility knows that he is a sinner. Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Year Vol. 11* quotes Venerable Bede commenting on the mystery of this passage: *“The Pharisee is the Jewish people, who boasts of the merits he has acquired to himself by observing the precepts of the law; the publican is the Gentile, who being far off from God, confesses his sins. The Pharisee, by reason of his pride, has to depart in humiliation; the Publican, by lamenting his miseries, merits to draw nigh to God—that is to be exalted (“But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me the sinner.’” Lk. 18: 13). It is of these two people, and of every man who is proud or humble, that it is written: ‘The heart of a man is exalted before destruction, and it is humbled before he be glorified.’”* (Prov. 18:12) Gueranger, p. 268

The Humble are exalted

Dom Gueranger instructs us that the message of today’s Gospel is seen in the history of the Jews. *“The Synagogue has been rejected, has been cast out; and the Church is thereby declared the exclusive heir of the promises. (cf. Gal. 4:30). She is now sole depository of God’s gifts; and she leads her children to St. Paul, that he may put before them the principles which should guide them in the appreciation and use of those gifts. In our Epistle*

(today) he is speaking of those absolutely gratuitous favours which, at the first commencement of the Church, were, more or less enjoyed by every Christian assembly....The rapid conquest of the world, which from the very commencement was to give evidence to the catholicity of the Church, required a large effusion of power from on high; and, in order that the promulgation of the new Testament might be made authoritatively among men, it was necessary that God should give it all possible solemnity and authenticity. This He did, by accompanying it with signs and wonders, of which He alone could be the author. Hence, in those early days, the Holy Ghost took not possession of a soul by Baptism, without giving an external sign of His presence in that new Christian—without, that is, one of those manifestations which the apostle here enumerates. The Witness of the Word ((Holy Ghost, cf. Jn. 15:26) fulfilled the twofold mission He had received; He sanctified in truth the faithful of Christ (cf. Jn. 17:17), and He convinced of sin the world which would not receive the word of the heralds of the Gospel (cf. Jn. 16:8-11).” Gueranger, p. 256-7 All these gifts (prophecy, miracles and wisdom) were proofs of the divinity of Christ which the Jews had rejected, and which the newly-converted Gentiles had accepted.

Happiness in Nothingness

Dom Gueranger comments on the meaning of today’s Gospel, *Luke* 18:9-14, in the light of the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles: *“In the whole Gospel, then, there was no teaching more appropriate than this, as a sequel to the history of Jerusalem’s fall. The children of the Church, who, in her early years, saw her humbled in Sion and persecuted by the insulting arrogance of the Synagogue, now quite understood that word of the Wise Man: ‘Better is it to be humbled with the meek, than to divide spoils with the proud.’”* Prov. 16:19 According to another Proverb, the tongue of the Jew—the tongue which abused the publican and ran down the Gentile—has become, in his mouth, as a *‘rod of pride,’* Prov. 14:3 a rod which in time, struck himself, by bringing on his own destruction (Fall of Jerusalem 70 AD)....Humility, which produces within us this salutary fear, is the virtue that makes man know his right place, with regard both to God and to his fellowmen. It rests on the deep-rooted conviction, put into our hearts by grace, that God is everything, and that we, by nature, are nothingness, nay, less than nothingness, because we have degraded ourselves by sin. Reason is able, of herself alone, to convince anyone, who takes the trouble to reflect, of the nothingness of a

creature; but such conviction, if it remain a mere theoretical conclusion, is not humility; it is a conviction which forces itself on the devil in hell, whose vexation at such a truth is the chief source of his rage....At the same time that this holy Spirit fills our souls with the knowledge of their littleness and misery, He also sweetly leads them to the acceptance and love of this truth, which reason, if left entirely to herself, would be tempted to look on as a disagreeable thought." Gueranger, p. 263-7

Humility in Heaven

Dom Gueranger tells us that the humility of the saints in heaven is greater for they see more clearly what they only faintly realized on earth: "Their happiness, yonder above, is to be gazing on and adoring that altitude of God, of which they will never have an adequate knowledge, and the more they look up at the infinite perfection, the deeper do they plunge into their own nothingness...how the greatest saints were the humblest creatures here below, and how the same beautiful fact is still one great charm of heaven. It must be so, for the light of the elect is in proportion to their glory. What then, must all this exquisite truth be, when we apply it so to the great Mother of God? The nearest to the throne of her divine Son, she is precisely what she was at Nazareth; that is, she is the humblest of all creatures, because she is the most enlightened of all, and therefore understands, better than even the Seraphim and Cherubim, the greatness of God and the nothingness of creatures." Gueranger, p. 269-70 No wonder Our Lady, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said in her Magnificat these words: "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid.*" Lk. 1:46-8

Pride begets many sins

Today's parable of *The Pharisee and the Publican* reminds us of the many sins that can be committed from pride, one of the seven capital sins. The pride of the Pharisee is seen in his contempt of the Publican. Cornelius A Lapide in his book, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Mark*, comments: "See says an interlineator on St. Augustine, 'how the nearby publican became an occasion of greater pride for the Pharisee. ...Out of pride, he judges rashly and falsely that the publican was wicked, when in fact he was already penitent and justified. The Pharisee sins therefore, 1. In judging rashly; 2. In despising the publican; 3. In reviling and insulting him, for he casts up to the publican his

sins.'" A Lapide, p. 649 No wonder the Lord rejects the proud and self-righteous and gives His grace to the humble: "...for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." Lk. 18: 14

Addendum

The New Evangelization IV

Saints on the Necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation

Naturally, the truth that there is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church has been supported by all the saints from every age. Following are several examples:

St. Irenaeus (130-202), Bishop and Martyr: "The Church is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. On this account we are bound to avoid them We hear it declared of the unbelieving and the blinded of this world that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come Resist them in defense of the only true and life giving faith, which the Church has received from the Apostles and imparted to her sons."

St. Augustine (354-430), Bishop and Doctor of the Church: "No man can find salvation except in the Catholic Church. Outside the Catholic Church one can have everything except salvation. One can have honor, one can have sacraments, one can sing alleluia, one can answer amen, one can have faith in the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and preach it too, but never can one find salvation except in the Catholic Church."

St. Fulgentius (468-533), Bishop: "Most firmly hold and never doubt that not only pagans, but also Jews, all heretics, and all schismatics who finish this life outside of the Catholic Church, will go into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604): "The holy universal Church teaches that it is not possible to worship God truly except in Her and asserts that all who are outside of Her will not be saved." **St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226):** "All who have not believed that Jesus Christ was really the Son of God are doomed. Also, all who see the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and do not believe it is really the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord . . . these also are doomed!"

St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274), the Angelic Doctor: **“There is no entering into salvation outside the Catholic Church, just as in the time of the Flood there was not salvation outside the Ark, which denotes the Church.”**

St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716): **“There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. Anyone who resists this truth perishes.”**

St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Bishop and Doctor of the Church: **“Outside the Church there is no salvation...therefore in the symbol (Apostles Creed) we join together the Church with the remission of sins: 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins'...For this reason the Church is compared to the Ark of Noah, because just as during the deluge, everyone perished who was not in the ark, so now those perish who are not in the Church.”**

“St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori (1696-1787), Bishop and Doctor of the Church: **“All the misfortunes of unbelievers spring from too great an attachment to the things of life. This sickness of heart weakens and darkens the understanding, and leads to eternal ruin. If they would try to heal their hearts by purging them of their vices, they would soon receive light, which would show them the necessity of joining the Catholic Church, where alone is salvation. We should constantly thank the Lord for having granted us the gift of the true Faith, by associating us with the children of the Holy Catholic Church ... How many are the infidels, heretics, and schismatics who do not enjoy the happiness of the true Faith! Earth is full of them and they are all lost!”**

“Ven. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958): **“Some say they are not bound by the doctrine which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing. Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation. Others finally belittle the reasonable character of the credibility of Christian Faith. These and like ERRORS, it is clear, have crept in among certain of our sons who are deceived by imprudent zeal for souls or by false science.”**

The greatest act of charity that one can perform is to bring others to the truth. The Catholic Faith is a gift from God, one that can be shared, one that gives life and salvation. Mother Church, being

solicitous for the welfare of all mankind, has always sought to bring all into the *One Fold*” (cf John 10:16), and to unite all in the profession of the one Faith given to us by Christ through the Apostles. If She were to hide the truth, or be content to leave others in their error, She would be cruel and indifferent.