

Twenty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, if we listened closely to the first reading and the Gospel, they are shocking: both are God's call to the prophet and to the Church to call the people of God to conversion of heart, mind, soul and our behavior.

Cognitive psychology tells us that this is how human behavior works. The brain and mind are the greatest super computer ever invented, because it is the handiwork of God the Creator. All human computers function after the function of the human brain, because that is the model for the computational systems mankind has invented. We think, and therefore, we act. It is as simple as that!

God teaches us today the reality and the destructive nature of sin, which is an offense against God and our neighbor. Our personal choices have profound consequences, either for the good and for life and true freedom; or, for death and enslavement of ourselves and others to our sinful choices. An example is that a kind word or act can leave us filled with joy and heals us; whereas, a sinful act often leaves deep and profound wounds in the lives and psyches of others. We see this truth now raging around us in our big cities!

God has given us the wonderful gift of Free Will; however, our Free Will, if used wrongly can lead us into a deepening slavery to our disordered passions and can take away the freedom of others: thus, the Nazi Concentration camps of World War II forced millions into forced labor and total depravation of their horrifyingly distorted views of human beings which reduced men and women and children to objects to be murdered and discarded. We see it again and again in our contemporary history in China, North Korea, India, Africa, and in the United States in the Riots now happening around the country. However, on a more personal level, we see the wounds we have caused in others, and within ourselves by our sinful choices! As St. Paul says in Romans: "What a miserable man I am! Who can save me from this body of death?" Only Jesus, only Jesus!

In the Word of God for us today, Jesus gives us a way out of our slavery to sin. It is to use our Freedom of Will to the Good, directed by the Gospel and the Law of God: "Love God with your whole heart, your whole mind, and with all of your

strength, and then love your neighbor as yourself!" This sums up the whole of the law and the commandments of God! Do we believe Jesus, or not?

However, Jesus also gives us the means of the conversion of our minds and hearts and will, and the means to freedom: we must call each other to the Freedom of the Sons and daughters of God by challenging and sometimes, admonishing one another to know and practice the Law of God, we must listen deeply to the call of God to know and practice the Law of God, and we must use the means of changing our hearts and minds: chiefly, admitting our sins, being sorry for them, repenting from them, and using the Sacrament of Confession to receive the Infinite Mercy and Healing of God, and by applying the anointment of healing: The Grace of the Sacrament and Penance and prayer.

This examination of our consciousness, is not at all pleasant; however, God gives us this as a Grace to conform our deepest selves to Christ, and not to the slavery of the world, the flesh and the devil!