

## Homily for 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

My beloved brothers and sisters: the Gospel for this Sunday is especially timely. It speaks to us and challenges us, about going through the motions of religion without the interior conversion of faith, hope and love, and obedience to the Commandments of God- a religious practice, without the heart and soul of the Gospel. This has been going on throughout the history of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the last five weeks, I have been unnerved and shaken by all of the scandals that have occurred in the Diocese and in the Nation and in the Hierarchy of the Church, reaching to the very highest levels of the Church. Truly, we are seeing the ugly face of the demon. Paul the VI warned us, as did Pope Benedict XVI: "The smoke of Satan has entered the Church through the cracks in the floor of the Sanctuary." There has been a profound failure of leadership within the Church, and the very institution of the Church given by Jesus, which is meant to shelter His beloved sheep, has been betrayed. It has left me, and no doubt yourselves, feeling angry and filled with shame, and with a great sorrow. Those who were called to lead and protect the flock of Jesus, have abused and even denied the abuse that has occurred! It has left me with deep questions in my soul; I am so glad I have had the month of August to pray in silence; but also a most beloved sister, who spent time with me, sharing with me and helping me to process this profound sorrow that both she and I experienced!

The lesson of conversion for today's Gospel, which is also the heart of conversion is: 1. To acknowledge our sins with true sorrow. 2. To turn away from our sins and, 3. To turn back to God with all our hearts, 4. To do penance and reparation and prayer for our sins and the sins of the world and the works of charity.

This was the message of Lourdes, Fatima and Akita in Japan in the last 150 years. Our Lady repeated this message again and again, saying that the fate of mankind would depend upon this call to radical conversion. What is needed as a remedy for today, is that we answer the call of God to become His saints. Our Lady has given us the means through Her Son Jesus: Pray, Pray, Pray, Penance, Penance, Penance, most especially, the prayer of the Holy Rosary, the frequent reception of

Holy Communion, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Reparation for our sins by keeping the First Saturdays as She has asked, and Penance for our own sins and the sins of the world, and the works of Charity. We have been given the weapon to combat the evil of our time; it is the Holy Rosary and all that Mary has asked of us through her Son! However, we must also not be afraid to challenge our leadership, both in the Church and in our Society, to be responsible, and to protect the most vulnerable amongst us.

My beloved brothers and sisters, the great temptation to us in this evil and dark time, is the temptation to discouragement and despair. That is exactly the plan of the evil one, to make us turn away from our Hope, Jesus. We are called to remember that we are the beloved disciples of Jesus. He offers us His quiet presence in this darkest hour, He calls us to put our pain, and our discomfort, our suffering into the depth of the heart of His Mother and His own Heart, remembering that she stood with Him and the Beloved disciple, at the foot of His cross to the very end. He is our path to peace and our light, He will triumph in the end, both in our lives, and our struggles with sin, but also in this dark valley of tears. He will never abandon His beloved. We are the Church, and despite the sin of a minority, that is so terrible, Jesus reigns. Come to Jesus, tell Him your heart, and although this is profoundly painful to me as well and to our Deacons, come, share your and your burdens with us as well!