



Thursday 14th October 2021

Thursday of the twenty-eighth week in Ordinary Time Year 1

First Reading

Rom 3:21-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

A person is justified by faith apart from the law.

God's justice that was made known through the Law and the Prophets has now been revealed outside the Law, since it is the same justice of God that comes through faith to everyone, Jew and pagan alike, who believes in Jesus Christ. Both Jew and pagan sinned and forfeited God's glory, and both are justified through the free gift of his grace by being redeemed in Christ Jesus who was appointed by God to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation through faith. In this way God makes his justice known; first, for the past, when sins went unpunished because he held his hand, then, for the present age, by showing positively that he is just, and that he justifies everyone who believes in Jesus.

So what becomes of our boasts? There is no room for them. What sort of law excludes them? The sort of law that tells us what to do? On the contrary, it is the law of faith, since, as we see it, a man is justified by faith and not by doing something the Law tells him to do. Is God the God of Jews alone and not of the pagans too? Of the pagans too, most certainly, since there is only one God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 129:1-6, R. v.7

(R.) With the Lord there is mercy,
and fullness of redemption.

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading. (R.)
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you. (R.)
3. My soul is waiting from the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak. (R.)

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 14:6

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord;
no one comes to the Father, except through me.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Lk 11:47-54

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The blood of the prophets is required, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.

Jesus said: 'Alas for you who build the tombs of the prophets, the men your ancestors killed! In this way you both witness what your ancestors did and approve it; they did the killing, you do the building.

'And that is why the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles; some they will slaughter and persecute, so that this generation will have to answer for every prophet's blood that has been shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was murdered between the altar and the sanctuary.'" Yes, I tell you, this generation will have to answer for it all.

'Alas for you lawyers who have taken away the key of knowledge! You have not gone in yourselves, and have prevented others going in who wanted to.'

When he left the house, the scribes and the Pharisees began a furious attack on him and tried to force answers from him on innumerable questions, setting traps to catch him out in something he might say.

Homily Rom 3 21 30 Justified by Faith with Lk 11 47 54 Lawyers Ignoring the Prophets
131021 **Thursday 14 October, 2021. A Homily on Romans 3:21-30.**

Fr Graham Fullick

Two questions: "Are you saved, brother?" and "Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour?" Ah, "Bible bashers". Living in Sydney and working in the CBD for 28 years, you got to know their haunts. In Town Hall Square they were always on the Woolworths Town Hall corner of Park Street and George Street, or on the opposite side off the Town Hall Steps, or down near the cinema strip at the corner of George and Liverpool Streets. Again, you would find them in Pitt Street Mall, or Hyde Park between St. James' subway entrance and the Archibald fountain as you walked to St. Mary's Cathedral. At Circular Quay Ferries they were there. And the special one: The same fellow year in year out, standing on the pediment of the statue of Prince Albert the Good in Queen's Square during the *Corpus Christi* June Eucharistic procession from St. Patrick's, The Rocks along MacQuarie Street to St. Mary's Cathedral. Up to 10,000 Catholics processed in prayer,

Adoration, Rosary and hymn singing as he always yelled out, raising his finger, berating us as the “Whore of Babylon” and “You are saved by faith *alone*”. His “*alone*” added.

One exasperation: Years ago, I was speaking with an exasperated funeral director at the back of one of our churches as she was setting up for a Catholic funeral. She told me she was a Protestant who converted to Catholicism. For decades she had witnessed funerals of all denominations and was impressed by the prayerfulness of Catholic funerals. The final realisation for her conversion was at a full Gospel, Pentecostal funeral as she stood at the back listening to the pastor preaching. The notorious deceased was spoken of as “a saint already in Heaven”. He had “accepted the Lord into his heart, in faith, as his Saviour, and was saved forever from that moment”. The funeral director reasoned, then why pastor if the deceased is perfectly justified, do you even bother to pretend to pray for him? Or how did his life’s choices matter? It was all, “Hey God, look out here he comes, celebrate his (fallen) life”. She said to me that in that moment she realised where the logic of faith and fullness of truth really was. The next week she asked to become an RCIA Catholic.

Now we recall from the Scriptures last week (Friday, 8 October, 2021) that Jesus said to the Apostles “ ‘He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters’.” (Lk 11:23) We counter this with Scripture for the week before last (Monday, 27 September, 2021). In answer to the Apostles’ protest that a man (not an Apostle) was casting out devils in his name, Jesus said “ ‘You must not stop him; anyone who is not against you is for you’.” (Lk 9:50)

What St. James tells us about faith is that we are not saved by faith alone but by faith and works. Like Christ in His humanity who dignified ours, we have both thought and action, faith and lived faithfulness. Our Lord exhorted us so many times that it is not those who simply say they have faith “who say Lord, Lord”, but those who do the will of [His] Father who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven and be ultimately saved. In fact, in James (Jas 2: 14-24) this teaching of the Son of God is applied and taken to heart: we are “justified by works and not by faith alone”. The only time in the Bible that *alone* is used adjacent to faith is to contradict the heresy of the “Born-again” Christian and point completely away from that falsehood. Faith in the Lord is not enough. Living faithfully by practical works is the moral and ethical requirement of every Christian. It is what Christ did. Faith in His Father had to be lived to perfection to win the very salvation misunderstood by the heretic. The whole Truth is required of faith and works together. Heresy is usually not pure evil, but a good wrongly understood, argued for too ardently or only incompletely understood, or only half said.

There is a moral (Latin derivation) or ethical (Greek derivation) programme in the New Testament of Jesus. We are to live not only for ourselves but for the God who made us and has redeemed us by his blood. The freedom of the children of God is the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus is the Living Testament of the Father and draws life from Him and they as One give life for us to live through the Holy Spirit, One with them in unity from the unbegun, unended beginning. The great moral programme of Jesus is in Him being God come as Man in the Incarnation: Christ’s humanity, one with us, among us in all things but sin. After the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:24), the gates of Heaven were closed with the highest of the Choir of Angels guarding the door with a flaming sword. Christ pierces the veil of Heaven back open in atonement for our disobedience inherited in the fallen will of Original

Sin. Soteriology is the theology of how Jesus by His Passion, death and Resurrection has redeemed us and subsequently saves His disciples. Christ is the atoning sacrifice, the only one acceptable as pure humanity, uncorruptible by sin, Sinlessness Himself who in His totalising humanity merits to save us by His Divinity. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and re-opens the gates of heaven, redeeming us. This does *not* mean that He has resurrected us. By Jesus' merits we have been remade and that is appropriated in our dying and rising in Baptism.

We must recall, if we should ever doubt it, that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling as St. Paul says (Philp. 2:12). When Eternal life which was forfeited by Original sin was re-won for us by Christ, what He was doing was saving the fallen free will of all humanity. What separates us from all other creatures and makes us the pinnacle of creation is our free will. Adam and Eve would not have been disobedient but for fallen free will. The dignity of human life is that God gives it meaning and hope in Jesus' coming to earth. **Our work in life is not done at our Baptism.** It has just started. The Holy Spirit is with us in the journey of new life in Christ. We who have been redeemed, set free by Christ, now have the opportunity in time, the life God gives us, to be virtuous. Jesus came that we "may have life and have it to the full." (Jn 10:10) As a matter of logic, apart from the totality of Revelation, Scripture and Tradition, **if we are saved by Baptism alone, then the rest of our lives would be a futile existence**, not dignified and pregnant with the joys, pains, hopes and travails of the freedom of will Christ gave us.

Building on the last two weekday homilies, conscience is the likeness unto God, the image of God in which we are created. The soul as the unique gift of God has an intellect of discernment of right and wrong, good and bad which is conscience. We are to pray to use it, to access God's grace so that His kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth in our will—our co-operation with grace. This is what he taught us in the Our Father, the singular prayer for our appropriation of salvation. Accepting to live by God's grace is an active process of sanctification in daily life, of becoming holy as our heavenly Father is holy. Grace is given to us to build on nature. Yes we are redeemed, but we do not have the assurance of salvation, but rather of God's *hesed* mercy. King David, St. Peter, the Prodigal Son were all justified, but they fell out of God's saving justification through active sin. Why would God have instituted the sacrament of the forgiveness of sins to forgive and retain *as well as* baptism if the Lord did not know that they and we would fall in and out of grace and needed this sacramental help to merit the justification won for us?

The whole purpose of Jesus teaching parables such as the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Darnel among the Wheat, the Parable of the Talents, the Good and Bad Sons (who said yes and did not do the Father's will, or who said no but then did do the Father's will), the Sower and the Seed of various level of fruitfulness is to reveal to us that there is a real moral programme of life to be sought out and lived in the New Testament times in which we now live. Life has even greater meaning as the fullness of Revelation in the Person of Jesus Christ has been given to us. If all are saved by choice once, why enjoin us to live and obey the Ten Commandments, not just their letter, but now their spirit? (Mt 5:19; 19:17) But the proof of faith and works together is given by God Himself. Jesus absolutely tells us that the very criteria of entry into heaven are doing good works which are the will of His Father. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 25: 31-46), Jesus is clear that what GOD counts as righteous, those who are "righteous into eternal life" (v. 46) and are "blessed of my Father"

(v. 34) are those who perform the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give the thirsty to drink, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, clothe the naked and visit the prisoners. Not to do those works is not only a personal affront to God, but leads to judgment of “eternal punishment”. (v. 46) So much for saying for “I have faith”, that “I am saved”. That is a sin of presumption of Heaven. The Lord God of Hosts determines our Eternal life.

Accepting Jesus as our Christ through faith is not enough. Yes, the doors of Heaven are re-opened in Baptism in faith. But we have a whole life to live faithfully. Faith and works must go together as they did in the Person of the Son of God. Conscience has meaning and purpose in that life we have too—and affords it reflection. Our Lord tells us that the good or bad things we choose to do determine again whether or not we will subsequently enter the gates of Heaven at the Resurrection and Last Judgment. We cannot presume to know the justice, that is the will of mercy of God. We are not to be so arrogant and proud, or ignorant of all Truth that we have been justified by Christ *regardless* of how we live the gift of life God has given us the time to live. We have to live a life in the Holy Spirit and answer for that life. The Lord’s criteria for entry into Heaven are not that we *shall* or *must* follow automatically into heaven, but that we *may* follow where He has opened the gates and the just *may* enter. Otherwise we conflate redemption with resurrection or more clearly we make Christ’s resurrection from the dead our own resurrection from the dead. That is a staged process. We have a life in the middle! And a wait after death. The Kingdom has been prepared by Christ’s own resurrection, but none of us firstborn sons or daughters accedes immediately to the Eternal Throne of Christ at Baptism. At Baptism we are washed clean with the Royal Blood and water flowing from the side of Christ. **The inheritance is available and we have the life tenancy. Our Heavenly Father however judges our stewardship of the Mystery of Salvation afforded to us. We are given time to accede to that throne of Eternal Life by our choices, acts, deeds, service, omissions and commissions in this temporal life.**

If Christ in His own life had to earn (in his humanity) and do the will of his Father by very hard choices over 33 years, then how can we say we are saved just by faith and not a faithful whole of life like Jesus himself had to live? The totality of Jesus’ life is good works summed up into the one act of our salvation on the Cross. But his Resurrection is not our Resurrection. He yes, has paved the way. We have to follow conscientiously. That following determines whether our inheritance will vest. We have a conscience and intellect to learn Scripture properly and to live properly, righteously as Jesus did. Are we entitled in baptism to more than Jesus himself who is God and had to live out his own life by conscientious choice day after day? No. Christ had perfect faith. But He had to lay down his life every day so as to take it up again. He had to live faithfully to gain His own heavenly reward. So must we.

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