

## Homily by Fr. Anthony Davis

**“All things work for good for those who love God, who are called to his purpose...”**

July 26, 2020

17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12; Rom. 8:28-30; Matt. 13:44-52

In these days of a global pandemic and its resultant devastation and chaos, I suppose it's easy to get disillusioned and cynical by an "anything goes" attitude. We become anesthetized by infidelity, tragedy and terror. Another person of color gunned down by a law enforcement Officer who is supposed to know better; some members of families and friends who succumb to the venom of COVID-19, and there seems to be no end in sight!! For some it is now a question of survival of the fittest!! Thus we'd be paralyzed if we immersed ourselves in these heartbreaking realities; for the grief is overwhelming.

Yet, I reverence the words of Mohandas Gandhi: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible. But in the end, they always fall -- think of it, ALWAYS."

Today's readings remind us of the primacy of HOPE. Like faith and love, hope is a theological virtue- a supernatural reality. Hope is not wishful thinking; that's optimism, and that (optimism) is blind to the jagged edges of time, and blind to the healing power of our pain. That's "pie-in-the-sky" or what some call "low-level religion." In contrast, hope is grounded in reality, in wrestling with God, in the messiness of falling in love. It is why Pope Francis once compared the Church to a field hospital that we go for healing and solace.

Life Message: Hence, in today's Gospel, Jesus says that the Kingdom of God must be the priority for all his followers. The word "priority" means first, or superior. And philosophically, logically, practically.... You cannot have more than one priority, ...or it's not a priority. It may be important, it may be significant, even indispensable or essential, but not the priority. Accordingly, Jesus is uncompromising in these parables of a pearl or a treasure buried in a field.

This means, "Every choice is a renunciation". St. Thomas Aquinas said that, and it helps explain why we struggle so painfully to make clear choices. We want the right things, but we want other things too. Every choice is a series of renunciations: If I marry one person, I cannot marry anyone else; if I live in one place, I cannot live anywhere else; if I choose a certain career, that excludes many other careers; if I have this, then I cannot have that. The list could go on indefinitely. And so to choose one thing is to renounce others. That's the nature of choice. That's the nature of a priority...no matter what our culture tries to tell you.

The world of advertising and entertainment and corporate finance tries to convince us that we can multi-task and have a series of "priorities." But life and love, beyond the abstract and beyond the grandiosity of our own daydreams, involve hard, painful renunciation. But it is precisely that very renunciation that helps us grow up and makes our lives real in a way that our daydreams don't. And maybe "anything goes" attitude/lifestyle, doesn't work so well after all.

Therefore, St. Paul encourages us today: "All things work for good for those who love God, who are called to his purpose... And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified". (Rom.8:28-30).

Stay blessed!!