

FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
September 19, 2021
“The Church in Conflict with the World”

We can see once again that the first reading, an Old Testament passage taken from the Book of Wisdom, closely describes what happened to Jesus Christ. A paraphrase of this passage might look something like this (Ws 2:12, 17-2):

- “Let us persecute the just one because he makes us uncomfortable with his teaching.”
- “He constantly reminds us of things we are doing that are against God’s law.”
- “He claims that God will protect him from us his persecutors, because he is the son of God.”
- “And so let us torture him and see if his words are true.”
- “Let us kill him with the shameful death only given to criminals.”

Many scripture scholars see this passage as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, in his passion and death on a cross.

Now in the Gospel, Jesus once again tries to tell his Apostles that He will be condemned and put to death. The passage said that they didn’t understand what Jesus was trying to tell them. It was probably more likely that they just didn’t want to accept it because it didn’t match their own plans for a glorious earthly kingdom with each of them holding high ranking positions in it. After all, they were arguing about who amongst them was the “most important” (Mk 9:30-37).

They will indeed eventually hold high positions in the Church that Jesus will establish – but it will be nothing like they imagined. Jesus said: “it is sufficient for the servant to be like the master and the student like the teacher” (Mt 10:24-25). Eventually, each of the Apostle will walk in the footsteps of suffering like their master and teacher Jesus Christ. They will for the sake of Jesus and the church receive their own form of suffering, persecution, and death. They will remember these words from Jesus: “Unless you pick up your cross and follow me you cannot be part of my kingdom.”

The mystical body of Jesus is his Church, particularly, its people (CCC 1474). We are His body. We are the “living stones” which contain His spirit (1 Pt 2:4-5). We are now the body of Christ, the presence of Christ walking the earth. Everything that Jesus said to His Apostles applies now to us His Church on earth. Everything that happened to Jesus Christ must happen to His body the Church. Just as that Wisdom passage was fulfilled in Jesus, it must also be fulfilled in His body the church. He said to His apostles that He would be delivered into the hands of evil men and put to death – but then would eventually rise and overcome death.

His body the Church is constantly being persecuted by evil men. Sometimes, these evil people are outside of the Church – but sometimes they are from within her and betray her like Judas did. We recall that Judas was an apostle, a member of the Church.

This persecution of the Church occurs for many of the same reasons Jesus was persecuted in fulfillment of that Wisdom passage:

- The Church reminds people to live the commandments.
- She reminds people of the moral law and encourages people to live it.
- The Church condemns evil practices and calls people to conversion.
- The Church reminds people of God's judgement and that it is possible to be condemned to Hell.
- The Church condemns abortion, same sex marriage, contraception, fornication, illicit divorce and remarriage, etc.
- The Church encourages authentic family life – one man, one woman and their children.

Is it any wonder that a world that accepts and promotes immoral practices hates the Church? Many in our world and even some who are members of the Church – hate the Church for teaching these truths. Because of this, they either want to eradicate the Church completely as the communists want, or they want to transform the Church into their own image and not in the image of Her founder, Jesus Christ.

This battle between the Church and her enemies has been going on for 2000 years since her founding. The Church is living out the persecutions of Jesus Christ and those prophecies of persecution that apply to Him.

Like the Apostles who didn't understand that Jesus was born to suffer and die for his people, many in the Church today do not want to accept that the Church, the body of Christ, must climb Calvary just as Jesus her founder did. The evidence exists for those who want to see it. Some can see this reality of current and future persecutions and are preparing themselves spiritually for it. Others will be caught off guard because they are blinded by world pursuits, busy trying to advance themselves, and convince themselves that they are more "important" than others.

In so many ways they have rejected that child that Jesus draws to himself in the Gospel and puts his arms around. The secret of life and truth is in that child.

Jesus said: "Whoever welcomes a child such as this welcomes me!"

So much for those phony Catholic politicians that promote and support the killing of children in abortion. They are deceivers like their father (Jn 8:44). And we continue to pray for them. To a large extent, the Church is undergoing her current persecution because of the hypocrisy of people like these and those who support them. They sold out for a "mess of pottage" (Gen 25:29-34).

That Wisdom passage prophesied that the Messiah must suffer and die at the hands of evil men. Jesus the Messiah lived out and fulfilled that prophesy. His Church, you and I, must pick up our crosses, face reality, and follow after Him on the road to Calvary. If we wish to be part of His kingdom and not of this world (Mt 16:24) (Jn 18:36).