

**Homily – Fr. Bradley Neely**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle A**  
**Grangeville - Nezperce: Aug 28, 2011**  
**Jer 20: 7-9; Rom 12: 1-2; Mt 16: 21-27**

Church historian Christopher Dawson,  
is quoted as saying:

"Catholicism doesn't rest  
on the consensus of *human wisdom*,  
but *divine revelation*."

[Hold that thought  
while I cut right to the chase].

In today's Gospel,  
Peter—[I think, who means well]--  
claims that nothing  
such as suffering and death  
should ever happen to the Lord.  
Christ is quick to respond,  
"*Get behind me Satan!*  
*You are an obstacle to me.*"

We've seen other instances  
when something spoken by Christ  
might seem harsh to our modern ears.  
This is precisely the time, once more,  
to go back to the original language  
to see what might be involved  
with the phrasing Jesus uses.  
In this case, the actual word  
Jesus uses in the Gospel---Satan---  
is a Greek word that means,  
"the accuser, the devil."  
Going back even further in time,  
before the birth of Christ,  
the Hebrew word used as "*satan*"  
referred to an "opponent,  
an arch enemy, an adversary."  
Given this, we could take Jesus to mean  
that Peter is acting as an adversary---  
an opponent to **God's plan**.  
I believe that over time,  
the word *satan* developed into a reference  
for God's fallen angel---  
the angel who made himself  
God's arch enemy.

In the Gospel,  
Jesus "adds to" and "clarifies"  
the "get behind me Satan" statement  
immediately after making it:  
"[Peter] *you are an obstacle to me.*"  
Unintentionally, Peter suggests impeding  
God's plan that Christ should suffer  
and die in order to claim victory  
over death for all who will follow Him.  
Jesus, on His part,  
is foretelling his suffering and death,  
to prepare his disciples  
for the events that would be coming.  
Christ's upcoming passion  
would surely be  
a severe crisis of faith for them.

Jesus' rebuke to Peter  
reminds him, as well as all of us,  
that ***the ways of God are not our ways***.  
There is an infinite, particular,  
[and divine] way in which  
**God looks at the world**.  
Remember that we are invited  
to share in this realm,  
by "losing" our lives in Christ.

In losing ourselves in this realm---  
immersing ourselves in Christ's life,  
our views of life,  
--by necessity---must broaden  
beyond our human limitations.  
\*We are to ***see*** the world differently---  
\*We are to ***live in*** the world, differently---  
\*We are to live our lives  
so that we may ultimately present ourselves  
as suitable for salvation  
in God's eternal kingdom.  
I've used this phrase before,  
"we are different in the world."

In other words,  
we are asked to ***plunge*** ourselves  
into the mind and plan of **God** for us.  
Why?

There are lots of answers to the question  
“why,”  
but Christ gives us one right in this Gospel:  
“*What profit would there be  
for one to gain the whole world,  
and forfeit his life?*”

Our proper response to this is obvious,  
but we’ve come across obvious answers  
to questions before:  
i.e. “I set before you life or death. Choose  
life.”  
And we know that some will still choose  
death.

If we are truly trust Jesus,  
and His Word in Scripture,  
then we certainly don’t want  
to endeavor gaining the whole world **more**  
than gaining the whole of heaven.  
What good is it to stuff cash  
to the brim of one’s casket?

Rather than forfeiting our salvation  
to the whims of the world,  
[and worldly whims change  
with the direction of the wind!]  
we are invited to **lose our lives in Christ**.  
We are invited  
while still living in this world,  
remembering that the world  
is not necessarily the bad guy.  
We simply want to enjoy the world  
God created for us  
***without excluding God!***

It would be good to prayerfully consider  
where we are in respect  
to “losing ourselves in Christ  
in order to save our lives.”  
If we haven’t really made that plunge,  
or need to enter into it more deeply,  
the next question is,  
“when is the right time?”  
In a couple of years?  
Upon retirement?  
Right before death?—

[hoping that we have some time].

Christ’s answer as to when  
we ought to lose ourselves  
in His life---seems to be:  
**2000 years ago.**  
In other words, “now.”  
Right now,  
giving ourselves to immersion in Him  
bit by bit and step by step.

In the Gospel,  
Jesus reveals to us even more  
about our journey in following Him.  
This journey is to include  
the carrying of our cross.  
*Carrying a cross* is something  
we likely try to avoid  
in our knee-jerk response to suffering.  
We don’t go looking for suffering,  
but it does seem to find us  
sometime in our lives.  
We must remember that Christ’s cross,  
the cross he freely took up,  
his passion and death,  
led to risen and glorious life on the other  
side.  
How can we refuse our own crosses,  
knowing the reality and necessity  
of Christ’s cross?  
If we flee the carrying of our own cross  
as we follow Christ,  
aren’t we really denying, then,  
who we are,  
what we believe,  
and Whose life we give ourselves to?

So, it considering all of this,  
it IS important to look through the lens  
of divine eyes  
as much as we are humanly able.  
So, I go again to where this homily began:  
"Catholicism doesn't rest  
on the consensus of *human wisdom*,  
but ***divine revelation***."