

HOMILY for 32nd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

A doctor, a nurse, & the president of a health insurance company died & were met by St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter asked the doctor, “What did you do on earth?”

The doctor replied, “I healed the sick & worked at a clinic so that if patients could not pay I would help them for free.

“You may enter,” said St. Peter.

Then he asked the nurse what she did on earth.

“I also helped heal the sick & volunteered my time at a free clinic,” she replied.

“What did you do on earth?” St. Peter asked the third person.

The man said, “I ran a large health insurance organization. I helped thousands of companies find cost-effective health care for their employees.”

“Well, then,” St. Peter replied, “You may go in... but you can only stay for three days!”

As you can see, the doctor, the nurse, & the health insurance president all thought that they have done a lot of good for their neighbors with their jobs. That might be true from their own perspectives. But, from St. Peter’s perspective, everything they did in this life might look differently. That is why he rewarded the HMO president only 3-day stay in Heaven. Believe it or not, that is exactly what this Sunday’s readings want to talk to us about. They want us to switch our perspective & focus on the one that matters the most. The perspective that matters the most for a soul is God’s. For God will use the divine perspective to review our earthly life & judge us to see if we’re worthy of a place in Heaven or not. The readings want to remind us that the only perspective that matters in this life and the next is God’s. So, we better use the divine perspective to make our daily decisions & live our earthly life. Otherwise, we will miss out on the eternal life completely after our current one.

In today’s First Reading, we have learned that seven brothers & their mother were arrested & tortured by the king who forced them to eat pork in violation of God’s laws. But, the king could not change their mind & make them take on the King’s perspective. For the only perspective that mattered to them was God’s. Listen to the responses of the brothers, “...We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors... Or, you are depriving us of this present life, but the king of the world will raise us up to live again forever. It is for His laws that we are dying... Or, it was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of His Laws I disdain them; from Him I hope to receive them again... Or, it is my choice to die at the human hands with the God-given hope of being restored to life by Him; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.” As you can see, the seven brothers & their mother adopted the divine perspective & used it to guide their daily life & make their daily decisions. That perspective might run directly into conflict with the perspective of the human authority. But, this saintly family did not abandon it. They would rather suffer & die for it. For they knew that God would use the divine perspective to judge the whole world & reward them with the eternal life & resurrection after this life. They surely picked the right perspective to guide them on the earthly journey.

However, the divine perspective does not only guide us & help us make the right decisions in this life. It also transforms us & gets us ready for a life in Heaven. To help us understand & appreciate the second benefit that the divine perspective would give us, today’s Second Reading shares with us an encounter between the Sadducees & Jesus. Apparently the

Sadducees came up with a story of a woman who married one brother after another & outlived them all. She finally died like the seven brothers. The Sadducees asked, "At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?" They thought that they were able to trap Jesus with this "pickle" situation. But, they did not realize that they used the human perspective to decide on the heavenly issue. It is not going to work. Furthermore, they forgot that Jesus came from Heaven; & hence He would know exactly how the relationships work up there due to His divine perspective. So, Jesus wanted to use this opportunity to school the Sadducees about Heaven & the importance of having the divine perspective. He said, "The children of this age marry & are given in marriage; but those judged worthy of a place in the age to come & of resurrection from the dead do not. They become like angels & are no longer liable to death." As you can see, because of his divine perspective, Jesus was able to let the Sadducees know that all the human relationships will be transformed into a special relationship in Heaven, namely, the angelic relationship. All the souls will become angels in Heaven & relate to one another in the angelic way.

I don't know if you have ever wondered why there is so much fighting & violence in our world these days. Even the Church is full of divisions & fights. I believe that the reason for all of that is because we have the wrong perspective in this life. We have used the human perspective instead of the divine one to make our daily decisions & guide us through this life. The human perspective will bring us confusion, division, manipulation, violence, & lots of bad things. On the other hand, the divine perspective will give us clarity, unity, wisdom, peace, harmony, & lots of wonderful things. Most importantly, the divine perspective will prepare us for the next life & help us have a glimpse of the life in Heaven.

My dear brothers & sisters, when we cannot see something clearly, we have to change our perspective by putting on a different pair of glasses or adjusting our distance from the object. Otherwise, everything will appear blurry or be hard for us to visualize. By putting on the divine vision & seeing from the perspective of God, we will be able to make the right decisions & know what to do every day to benefit us in this life & the next. Let me end my homily here & leave with you this blessing of St. Paul in today's Second Reading as you try to put on the divine perspective. He says, "...May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, may God our Father who loved us & in His mercy gave us eternal consolation & hope, console your hearts, & strengthen them for every good work & word." That is the power & benefit of the divine perspective.