

Homily – 2nd Sunday of the Year 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

‘Call and Response’

It must be horrible for a baby to be crying and no one is listening; or a lost lamb on the hill crying out for its mother and no response. Do we always see and hear who needs our help? Or again when we are in need of help is there anyone there who cares? God does care for us, but is anyone listening?

In the Gospel today we see someone who cares so much.... John the Baptist, he recognises Jesus as the ‘Lamb of God’. What does this mean? He’s seeing the call from God that Jesus is the saviour of the world. When he refers to him as ‘The Lamb of God’; he’s recognising the Exodus event being fulfilled. As the Jews celebrate ‘Passover’, they remember the Lamb of sacrifice which marked the journey from slavery in Egypt to travel to the ‘Promise Land’. All those who heard the call of Moses, sacrificed the lamb and marked their houses with a red cross. This is about being in touch with the message of God. – God then calls on the Jews in Mosaic law to offer up the lamb of sacrifice in atonement for their sins; hence the day atonement in the Temple of Solomon.

However, John the Baptist, the last great prophet, recognises that Jesus is the eternal lamb who comes to atone for the sins of the World. That he will turn the Passover Meal into his own body and blood; it will become the Holy Eucharist.

Every time we join in the Holy Mass, we hear the priest calling out, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world; blessed are those called to the supper of the lamb’!

However, there is a different but perhaps even greater persecution of the Eucharist going on in contemporary times, I’m not even talking about COVID-19 pandemic.

I’m referring to the attack on the Holy Eucharist by humanity on many fronts: -

Firstly, the discreditation of the Holy Priesthood by those who have betrayed their priestly vows and have disenfranchised their power to act in the persona Christi by their grave sins against the children of God, the Church.

Secondly, by the systematic attack on the Christian Faith by secular and humanist instructions, especially in the media, take for example the satire programme at Christmas by BBC + RTE, inferring that Mary was raped by God – They would have never dared to have been satirical with the Koran; so why with the Holy Bible?

Thirdly, the culture of materialism that breeds an attitude of complacency and apathy towards the ‘Eternal Lamb of God’.

It is most upsetting to see the number of ‘Lapsed Catholics who attend funerals out of respect for the dead, but have no respect towards Jesus in the Eucharist and seek to avoid any encounter with the Eternal Lamb in the Sacred Host, like they are running scared from Christ.

However, I firmly believe, taking a leaf out of St Paul’s letter to the Corinthian, that God is treating our present age as an opportunity for cleansing of the world. The disintegration of old structures and models of Church must be allowed to continue, so that a reborn Church may take its place. The Second Command of the Gospel today is “Come and See”. Come and see for yourself who Jesus truly is, come and abide in his presence, and then like Andrew+ Simon Peter, know that you have found the Messiah, the ‘Lamb of God’, who has come to take our sins away. Our response should be like

the Roman Centurion who marvelled mercy...., he a pagan, cried out! 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed'.

God Bless you all,

Love the Eucharist,

Love the Church,

Love God!

Fr Jeremy Bath