

Homily for 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

“The Word of God has meant for me insult and derision, all day long. I used to say, “I will not think about Him. I will not speak in His name anymore.”

Poor Jeremiah is fed up. As a prophet called by God to speak God’s Word to the people of Israel, his mission has met with insult and derision. He has become a laughing-stock, everybody’s butt.

Have you ever felt in your own vocation a little faint-hearted? The feeling of taking one step forward and two steps backward.

I remember one such occasion in my own vocation, the sense of slightly losing one’s focus. What gave me a new impetus was hearing my niece sing a hymn she had learned at school. The words of the hymn said:

“I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.

The Cross before me, the world behind me, the Cross before me, the world behind me, the Cross before me, the world behind me, no turning back, no turning back.”

In today’s Gospel our Lord rebukes Peter because Peter doesn’t want our Lord to suffer such a shameful death on the Cross. I think that at the heart of this dialogue with Peter our Lord is trying to help Peter see that He is carrying out His Father’s Will.

“I have come, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent Me. Now the will of the one who sent Me is that I should lose nothing of all that He has given to Me, and that I should raise it up on the last day.”

Jesus realised that that the Father’s will would only be accomplished by the victory of Love, a love that would conquer evil and death, and that His Cross would become a symbol of victory.

Our Lord desires that each of us should seek to do God’s Will in our daily lives. It is by fidelity to our particular vocation in life that we fulfil God the Father’s Will for us. Each of us has a particular Vocation - a parent, a spouse, a priest or deacon, a dedicated single life, and it is through fidelity to our vocation that we find joy in doing God’s Will.

Yesterday someone introduced me to a young Italian whose name is Carlo Acutis. Pope Francis is to beatify Carlo in October. He is a wonderful model for our young people. From a very early age he developed a deep friendship with Jesus and with Our Blessed Lady. He attended daily Mass. He was fun-loving and gifted, especially with I.T. In fact I believe he is to be declared a patron Saint of the Internet and Social Media. He died from Leukaemia at the age of 15. In those few years he lived a life filled with the presence of God.

He had some inspiring sayings. **“To always be close to Jesus, that is my life plan.”**

“Our aim has to be the infinite and not the finite. The infinite is our homeland. We have always been expected in Heaven.”

Jesus is my great friend and the Eucharist my highway to Heaven.”

“All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies. “

“Be the original God made you to be!”

“With such a great cloud of witnesses on every side of us, we, too, then should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our Faith and brings it to perfection; who for the sake of the joy which lay in the future, endured the Cross, disregarding the shamefulness of it, and from now on has taken His place at the right of God’s throne. Think of the way He stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.” (Hebrews 12: 1-4)