

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time and Sexagesima (Second Sunday before Lent) 2019

✠ In the Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Spirit.
Amen.

When I read the first reading from 1 Samuel, it struck me you could not make this stuff up. I am not a great fan, but I do occasionally watch superhero films on TV like a bit of “Hercules the Legendary Journeys” the other day, and watched the original “Superman”, many years ago, as a very young man. That is other than “Dr Who”, and of course Dana Scully and Fox Moulder, working their way towards “the truth that is out there”, in The X-Files. So now you know something about my occasional taste in stories, which escape reality for an hour or so.

The biblical story here was historical, and gave an example of respect for those God had anointed. The Pope is “getting the stick” right now for in turn criticising this week, those who constantly criticise the Catholic Church. He said to pilgrims from southern Italy these people are serving the purposes of the devil. He actually said they were 'friends of the devil', he was as direct as that.

The Pope clearly didn't mean those who justly draw attention to the attacks of evil within the Church by individuals deeply harming others, those who witness to these wrongs, and all wrongs that destroy people's Faith. Instead he meant those peoples and organisations like some media, anti-Catholics and atheists, who seek always to “bad mouth” Christ and his Catholic Church. We have always had them, the false witnesses against Jesus at his trumped up trial, those who yelled “crucify Him”, and even the Roman Empire Governor Pilate, who scoffed to Jesus the revealing words “what is Truth”.

Jesus said “I am the way the Truth and the life anyone who comes to me has eternal life.” “I abide in them and they abide in me”. To be a Catholic is no light or matter, it is a deep joy, assurance and an immense spiritual strength.

Nor is it something that passes when things get tough, or we are bullied, or criticised, or belittled, because as they may mock “we are religious” or, “you are a Catholic”, as the bullies and scoffers say. We are on God’s side, and God is on our side. He deeply respects our freedom to choose good over evil. We are called to always choose good.

Our greatest Hero, is the Heavenly and human man Jesus, who is the second Adam, who removes guilt and sin and evil from us. Not only us but all others who come to really know Him, His teaching, and the Church that He set up. People will come to us, seeking to know what we really believe, and really are all about, as they grow to suspect the constant false criticism against us may be just that, “false”. Also as the Godless life bites deep at them in disappointment and emptiness.

We must be a purified Church, ready for them, as the Pope is now planning with his bishops. This means, especially but not only the young, but all, must feel and be very safe, valued and truly loved in our Catholic community. From conception, through birth, through all our life to old age, and natural death. We are absolutely dedicated to exercise God’s love for ourselves, from that to extend God’s love to others. This is sourced in our love of God, and His forgiving and reconciling love for us.

Finally, I say two things to the new to our Faith, and the young who have had first confession, or reconciliation, as it is called, and now await Confirmation. Make confession to a priest your good regular habit. It strengthens us to be true heroes for God, even if we haven’t done very bad things, it re-orientes us, puts things in perspective, as we face the ups and downs of daily life. It inspires others, who see the grace of God in our lives.

It encourages others seeking something better than no faith, to seek the Truth that Jesus preached, that He lived, and He gave us at Pentecost. This was a gift of God in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Saints in heaven are powerfully on our side, and await eagerly for us to ask and speak to them in prayer. Ask an angel to be your friend, and a Saint to be your patron, who prays for and spiritually assists you. And finally never forget Our Blessed Lady Mary, Mother of Jesus, and therefore Mother of God, because Jesus is also God.

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