



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year B-July 11th 2021

Readings: Amos 7: 12-15, Psalm 84, Ephesians 1: 3-14,

Mark 6: 7-13

‘Try to see it my way

Do I have to keep on talking 'til I can't go on?

While you see it your way

Run the risk of knowing that our love may soon be gone

We can work it out

We can work it out....’

The compelling words of St. John of Lennon and the Blessed Paul McCartney (whose wisdom often graces the humble offerings of my sermons) from their ground-breaking 1965 double A side. Released, just before Christmas, on the flip side of ‘Day Tripper’, it anticipated the relationship breaking stress of the festive season and then, with its companion piece, the immediate distraction of planning the summer holiday. In its devastating simplicity it is a wonder that the composers of the liturgy did not see fit to employ this Beatles’ mantra as one of the invitations to confession at the opening of the Mass.

‘Try to see it my way.....We can indeed work it out.’

I raise this spiritual insight because, it seems to me that the Fab Four herein capture the essence of today’s Gospel and remind us of Jesus’

priority. He sends the disciples out to conquer the powers of evil with the call of 'repentance' on their lips. We are always in danger of forgetting this prerequisite of conversion, this foundational block of the spiritual house that is the temple of the soul. Repentance and reconciliation. 'Seeing it God's Way' rather than through the distorting prism of the fallen self.

The Faith is not about 'being nice' – that is a bonus growing from our love of God. It is not about doing good works. Those are an inevitable corollary of a heart aligned to the loving purposes of the Creator. It is about 'holiness' – not a smug pseudo-piety but a heart liberated from sin, joyful in the companionship of the pilgrim band and urgent in the glorious work of salvation – the pursuit of Man's eternal destiny.

The churches, in my lifetime, and even the real Church of which we are privileged to be a part, have too often shirked this fundamental duty. We have, too often, been prepared to 'cosy up to the culture' and fail to mention the increasingly yawning gap between the loving purposes of God and the direction of modern society heading back to paganism at Warp Factor 5. And paganism is a killer. True religion understands that Man is created in the image of the one true God – but fallen. Paganism creates false gods in the image of fallen Man – projections of the worst we have to offer. Idolatry of the self.

It is, I accept, not comfortable to have to proclaim the need for repentance to any society. We are nervous about seeming 'judgemental' or 'self-righteous'. But we are not proclaiming our own righteousness but the righteousness and saving, sacrificial love of Jesus. SALVATION and TRUTH.

If we look at the most popular funeral music in recent years – the last statement of a dead man - three of the top four places are filled by deliberate rejections of the Faith. 'Always look on the bright side of life'

from Monty Python's long cinematic sneer at Jesus. 'Imagine' – Lennon's categorical rejection of religion and Sinatra's clarion call to impenitence, 'My Way'.

We have become accustomed to the priority of the assertion of self and the relegation of God to a bizarre hobby of the elderly and immigrant communities.

The Faith understands this reversionary tendency. It is deep in the heart of Fallen Man. It is at the root of his expulsion from Paradise.

Disobedience and disregard of the instructions of the Maker.

It is never comfortable to stand up and say something is wrong, to call the people to repentance, but that is the task of the Church, your task and mine. We are not called to bless the culture but to offer the love and salvation of Jesus, the possibility of reconciliation and return to Paradise and our eternal destiny. The hymn of the Church is not 'My Way' but 'THY WAY'.

We don't need to IMAGINE no religion.....it's unfolding before us.

Parliaments in Europe, once the heartland of the Faith, agonise about the feelings of lobsters or chicken embryos while discussing extending the destruction of human children up to birth.

Governments and international corporates falling over one another to subsidise and glorify the public parading of unnatural practices as 'family events'.

Irresponsible medical authorities, in the maw of rejecters of the Hippocratic Oath, advocate and encourage self- mutilation of those with serious mental health issues.

A movement, masquerading as compassion, for the elimination of the disabled and the extermination of the vulnerable sick.

Some false churches, at this moment, queuing up to affirm these tragic developments and trying, belatedly, to get on the pagan bandwagon.

And for those who oppose these tragic and unhappy developments, who care about the happiness of Man and his destiny, - the threat of prison.

We don't call for repentance because we are perfect. We call because we care about our fellow man and, as penitents ourselves, we know something of the glorious freedom and joy of that reconciliation which has been won for us by the Cross. The Faith is the Gospel of Life.

Paganism is the great enemy of Man. Repentance is not about miserable grovelling but an engagement with the truth, a rejection of the isolating tyranny of self, a reclamation of our original destiny and our inheritance as the children of God.

Only penitents can truly preach the joy of repentance.

Why would we not want to share that?