

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH
HOMILY FOR THE 21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)
24th August 2014

Our Gospel today focuses on St. Peter as it did two Sundays ago and will do again next Sunday. We hear today's Gospel every year on the Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul, so let's approach it from a different angle by starting with our opening prayer.

Our opening prayers at Mass always start by saying something about God, not because God has forgotten who he is but because we need to be reminded of the nature of the God to whom we are praying.

“O God who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose—“

We believe in one God, a perfect God.

A perfect God is perfectly at one, with no inner conflict and no inconsistency.

Therefore, God's desires are clear and unchanging.

He has a will to be done and a single purpose to achieve.

We pray, “Thy will be done” in the Lord's Prayer.

Our prayer now asks God to help us: “Grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise.”

In order to achieve that one single purpose we need to love what God commands and desire what he promised.

We need to be strongly motivated. Love is the strongest motivator

Most people do first what they love most for themselves.

If they do something for others do they do it for the person they love most?

If we love what we are commanded to do how different life would be.

Imagine loving to pay taxes.

We desire what we love. Our desires direct our lives. They are vitally important

At the Diocesan Children's Camp this year we were thinking and praying about “The Joy of the Gospel.”

We wanted to understand what we mean by joy.

We decided that joy is the fulfilment of our deepest and best desires.

So if we desire what **God** promises the fulfilment of our desire will bring us perfect joy.

Our prayer continues by recognising the difficulties - “the uncertainties of this world.” There are so many conflicting desires, how do we know which are from God?

Can our readings help?

St. Paul tells us that it is impossible to penetrate God’s motives or understand his methods!
So how can we know?

He is not saying that God is a complete mystery

He is telling us that our minds incapable of understanding God’s purpose completely, but we can know something of God because we are made in his image, we have something of God in our souls

So finally let’s return to Peter. He seems to have understood. Jesus praises his faith and tells him he is the rock on which he will build his Church.

This suggests that Peter simply trusted Jesus and followed wherever he led, even into the waters of the Sea of Galilee.

The single purpose in which we are to unite is simply to know Jesus more clearly and follow him more nearly through our prayer, our reading of the Word of God and the teaching of the Church which Jesus founded on Peter’s faith.

Our prayer ends by telling us why we do this, that our hearts may be fixed on that place where true joy is to be found.

With our hearts fixed on Jesus we can ignore the uncertainties of this world and allow our desire for union with him to give purpose our lives and joy to our souls.

Rev Geoffrey Carey