

Words to Ponder: *Messages*

Readings for Sept 16, from *the Word among us*
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Is. 50:4-9; Psalm 116; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35

9.15.12: Stella Maris Chapel... Father Ralph Jones [audio recording]

“Who do men say the son of God is?”

“In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

“Amen.”

“This is the supreme question of all time. The answer rests not only on your health and well-being during your life here on earth, but also on your return to heaven. Where will you spend eternity?”

“This name has been both loved and cherished, as well as cursed and blasphemed. It has been on the lips of saints and holy, righteous men and women of God and uttered in praise and thanksgiving. It has also been on the lips and tongues of those who have cursed God and have uttered all manner of disrespect and sacrilege against him.

“Those who know who Jesus truly is love, respect, and reverence his name above all other names. Why? Well, because in the holy Bible we are told, ‘There is no other name under heaven--- on earth--- by which you are to be saved’ [Acts 4:12]. Then a little later on you read, ‘They that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved’ [Rom. 10:13, Acts 2:21, JI. 2.32]. ‘Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, he will grant to you’ [Jn. 14:13].

“Thus, we can see that this name literally manifests all that it means. What’s that? Jesus’s name saves. From what? From eternal damnation and from any and all other things that threaten or come against your life, your walk, and God’s will to you. All things that have not allowed you to prosper and need help, even as your soul prospers.

“Now, for a vast number of individuals who do not know Jesus or what his name signifies, they are in what medical science would call the at-risk category for their lives not only of eternal damnation, but also of all the many blessings they could have through the knowledge, reverence, and use of that name.

“The Bible warns us of the pain and consequences of not knowing and properly placing the name of God in our lives. Thus, we read in sacred scripture, ‘My people perish for lack of knowledge’ [Hos. 4:6].

“For those who know the holiness, the blessedness of that name and, yet, fully and deliberately choose to misuse and abuse that name that’s above every other name--- that the Jews thought was so sacred that they never voiced God’s name ever, even to this day--- bring upon themselves an all manner of curse.

“Thus, we read in the holy Bible, ‘God will not hold him blameless who uses his name in vain’ [Ex. 20:7]. Again, ‘cursed be the man that obeys not the words of the covenant’ [Jer. 11:3, Dt. 27:26]; specifically, “you shall not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain” [2nd Commandment]. Yes, ‘A curse if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord’ [Dt. 11:28]. ‘You shall not swear by my name falsely; neither shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord’ [Lv. 19:12, 18:21].

“Now, even St. Peter in his humanness, which we all do in various ways, swore in public. Three times he even cursed, ‘I don’t even know him.’ As soon as he said that, a cock crowed. God was telling him through that cock, as had been prophesied, ‘Before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times’ [Mt. 26:34, Mk. 14:30, Jn. 13:38].

“Instantly, he repented and, in sorrow and tears, left the scene and later made it right with Jesus, who’s such a perfect gentleman and savior. Peter denied and cursed him in public, but Jesus gives him a chance to do the opposite in public without embarrassing him. Do you remember the occasion?

“‘Peter, do you love me?’

“‘Yes, Lord, I do.’

“‘Peter, do you love me?’ and then, finally, he asks him again.

‘Yes, Lord. You know I love you. You know all things.’

“If you’re to read in the Greek [version of the gospel], the first ‘you know I love you’ is like that of a friendship. The second time he answers is like a brother, someone in a close union with you, even more than a friendship. The third time is like, ‘My Lord and my Savior.’ Like his cursing--- *bloop, bloop, bloop*--- erased, but in the same direction. Thus, God gave him an opportunity to erase the slate.

“So, many today curse and have such a hardened conscience, they do not repent or see any need to. In trampling the name of the Lord in the dust before others, they are hauled off and condemned. They’re on that broad road the Bible talks about--- well-traveled road--- leading to destruction known as hell.

“In this regard, a few years ago--- listen carefully to this--- a few years ago a black box was recovered from a fatal airline crash in which every person was killed. In playing back the recording, it was told on NBC News, that one of the last things they could hear from the cockpit was one of the pilots cursing God all the way down.

“When God is not in your heart or in your mind, when you’ve told him to go to hell, be prepared. That’s for you to believe. He can never be outdone.

“Honor God’s name and be blessed, blessed abundantly in this world and in the next. Dishonor his name and be cursed forever and be forced to see perpetually the fires and the flames of hell.”

“Amen.”

“Lord, show me your ways so that I may discern your will” (the Word among us, Sept 2012, p. 36).