

## Deacon Mike's Homily for January 17 2016

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in ordinary time C

(This is generally what I shared on Sunday. The Bishop's message pre-empted this homily, so I had to summarize from this in preaching). There were a few other Holy Spirit prompts to boot I tried to include! In His Name!

**"The deepest depths of hell are reserved for those who remain neutral in a time of moral crises"**. Dante Alighierri

Brothers and Sisters, I was deeply struck by the words of the Prophet Isaiah in the 1st reading, **"For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet"**.

**Describe the plight of the prophets.....**

As we began the New Year did you give any thought as to what happened last year, which changed us, that changed our nation?

We as a nation faced increased threats of terror, economic uncertainty, increasing volatile politics of our time, and increased attacks on the Church's moral teaching.

Some things never seem to change!

As I thought back over the past year, what most astounded me was the revelation of the inner workings of Planned Parenthood revealed in the series of videos that captivated many. How Prophetic.....

Abortion was front and center for just awhile.

Yet just a few months later little has changed, few discuss it and life goes on, that is, for those who survive.....

I thought further back to January 22<sup>nd</sup> in 1973 when the Supreme Ct. declared that they did not know when life began, therefore abortion was declared legal for all nine months of pregnancy and for any reason.

Yet 43 years later, we now can see clearly just what really did happen that day if we just look at the facts.

How has the world changed since then?

Let me count some of the ways.

We as a nation allow for over 1.5 million abortions a year, nearly double since 1973.

The total number of surgical abortions alone is over 58,000,000, not including the chemical abortions and climbing.

In New York alone, 40% of all pregnancies end up aborted.

Among minorities in our major cities the abortion rate is as high as 60%.

Our birthrate has now dropped below replacement levels among our native population.

The divorce rate had doubled again to near 50 % not including the separation rate of so many participating in the “hookup generation”

We now have the Federal government mandating that the Church must provide health care insurance coverage for abortion and contraception for most of all of its employees, even the “Sisters of the Poor”.

There has been a move on the part of those who are pro-abortion to allow non doctors be able to perform abortions, in New York and California.

Catholic hospitals are under a direct threat to provide abortion, contraception and sex change operations, thereby threatening their very existence as a Catholic hospital.

They are being bullied by the government with the possible loss of Medicare and Medicaid funds.

We have reached the point where the killing the “Holy Innocents” of our time, receives a standing ovation when endorsed by certain political parties and candidates.

For the sake of our nation, our community, for the sake of future generations yet unborn- those who do not have a voice, those who may never have a voice----we cannot be silent.

We cannot be quiet!

When killing is seen as a viable option, and cheered in the halls of power, we as the people of God cannot be quiet.

When scraping a child from the womb is a routine event for 1 of 3 pregnancies in our nation, we cannot be quiet!

When our political leaders advocate laws to make death more accessible, and murder more manageable, and when living and dying is now merely a matter of choice, we cannot be quiet.

How did we get to this point?

**“First the Nazis went after the union workers but I wasn’t a union member so I did not care.....”**

**Then they went after the mentally handicapped, I didn’t care.....**

**Then they went after the Jews but I was not Jewish so I didn’t speak up**

**Then they went after the Catholics but I wasn’t Catholic so it didn’t matter....**

**Then they came after me and there was no one there to speak up for me..... Pastor Martin Neimoller, survivor 1945 Auchwitz**

Have we been too passive, too complacent, too accommodating? Maybe.

Maybe we have told ourselves too often, as so many have, “well, I’m personally opposed, but I don’t want to force my religious views on someone else.”

But what of the forcing of the culture of death upon our nation, by the secular non-religious folks?

While championing freedom and so called “choice” to kill or to let live, maybe they have not noticed, the fewer children on our playgrounds?

Maybe we haven’t noticed that there aren’t as many handicapped children anymore such as with those with Down syndrome, because more than 90% of them are being found and aborted.

Is this Christ-like?

How has the world changed?

It’s been there all along. Maybe we just haven’t noticed.

But maybe it’s time we did notice.

Maybe it’s time to take a harder look at our world and what we have become, and what we can do.

In the Gospel today we encounter the first miracle of Jesus, changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana.

It is truly a miracle of transformation, of conversion. It shows what Jesus does: he makes the ordinary extraordinary. He changes everything.

I can’t help but think that there is something terribly missing in us---in our culture, in our values---that need changing. Desperately so!

Recall the timeless teaching of the Gospel:

Whatever you did to the least of these,” Christ said, “You did to me”.

Think of what is being done to Christ 1.5 million times a year in this country alone!

That is what we must change.

For the sake of them, we cannot afford to be silent. We cannot be quiet!

There is something that we as a nation must do in the most fundamental of ways.

***We read in 2 Chronicles, 7:14, “If my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and heal their land!”***

We must pray.

Pray for our leaders in government and pray for our Church’s voice that needs to be heard.

Pray for divine mercy and forgiveness so desperately needed by so many.....

But we need to start with people even closer: ourselves.

Pray for courage. Pray to stand up for what is right, even when everyone else tells us that we are wrong.

These days especially, there is no shortage of people eager to do that.

Prayer's power lies not only in asking God to intercede in the events of our world, but in asking Him to intercede within us—

--asking Him to make us what he wants us to be, and then embracing that, with gratitude and with great faith.

If we pray for that, our potential is limitless.

We may become a holy people and we may begin to make a holy world.

And that is where real change begins.

This coming Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. Christians will gather in Hamilton around the old Butler County courthouse on High St., to pray for an end to the onslaught against life by legalized abortion, for healing and forgiveness for those who have experienced abortion in any way.

Queen of Peace Church will be open 6:30-8:30 pm for prayer Friday evening.....

Come and pray with Christians from many Christian communities.

Brothers and Sisters, has the world changed since 1973?

We know the answer.

But perhaps in another 40 some years, the answer will be different.

Perhaps in another 40 years, we as a nation and as a culture—will stop cheering death. We will; instead cheer life.

And we will be able to say it is so because we had the will, the desire, and the faith to make it so.

The miracle of Cana reminds us: An encounter with Christ changes everything.

Look at what he did with water, what he does shortly with the wine and the bread.

Imagine what he can do with each one of us.

And then imagine what that might mean for the world.

May we ask for Mary's intercession, especially through the Rosary, and respond to her command, "Do whatever he tells you....."

Amen!