

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Nov 13th 2015

Memorial of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, Virgin

Today's first reading from the Book of Wisdom unfortunately is so timeless that it is ridiculous. "All men were by nature foolish . . . who from the good things seen did not succeed in knowing him who is, and from studying the works did not discern the artisan." And, "For they search busily among his works, but are distracted by what they see, because the things seen are fair."

How easy it is to do this! To look admiringly at creation and created things, and even people, and worship them instead of the God who called all into being.

Do we create stone "gods" and bow down and worship these objects? ("Now if out of joy in their beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them.") Maybe we don't actually build shrines to inanimate objects in this "enlightened" age, but we do make "gods" of so many things in our day, such as technology, the latest trends, the people we deem "important to know"; the list could go on and on.

The last line in the reading seems especially written for us today: "For if they so far succeeded in knowledge that they could speculate about the world, how did they not more quickly find its Lord?" Indeed, how do we manage to do that?

Are we hopeless? Will humankind never change? No, we have hope in Christ. We have changed; we do change; we do stop now and then and pull ourselves up short. But we need the Lord through his Word to remind us, to cause us to stop and think and look in his direction. And we need each other—we need the strength of others' faith. That's all it takes to get realigned and refreshed, and to go on our way in the Truth.

Today's Gospel reading, though speaking of The End Times, with Jesus' references to how people will be going about their normal business when the world suddenly ends, is always a wake-up call to me when I hear it.

Whether it is the Second Coming or our own passing, to me it has always had the same meaning. We in the Creighton community have recently had a terrible tragedy that reminds us that death is often very unexpected. Three of our students and one former student, all young, bright and promising young women, were killed in a horrific car accident in October. The campus, their friends and families were all reeling from the reality of it all, and came together in many blessed ways to grieve and support one another. The fact that the gift of life is at once very precious and yet can end very suddenly was brought into painful focus for so many.

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