

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 2nd 2018

The Lord is not happy with his people, according to the prophet Amos, and intends to wreak havoc upon the nation. The people will be crushed, the swift will grow weary, the strong will grow weak, the warrior shall die, and having a swift horse will not save you from destruction. Why? Because of the nation's crimes. They must be doing some terrible things. Actually, if you listed those crimes for folks today, most people would scratch their heads and say, "Crimes? You consider these things crimes?" Taking advantage of the poor, father and son going to the same prostitute, using God's name in vain, keeping a person's down payment (not returning a garment given in pledge at the end of the day and, thus, making the person sleep without a covering), and having a party using the money taken by extortion - those are the things that God calls crimes? Then we live in a criminal society that actually calls some of these things legal.

The fact that these things are done in Israel is not even the Lord's biggest concern but that these are some of the things that were being done by the people that God removed from the land to make room for Israel. To God, only a people who forget what God had done for them could do such things. No doubt, they had forgotten God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

If today you hear his voice,

harden not your hearts.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The psalmist calls upon the people to remember God. In the final section, the psalm says, "Consider this, you who forget God...." It is not that the people do not recite God's teachings and profess his covenant. It is that these things have no meaning to them; they speak idle words. Then, as if they think that God is blind or does not care, they go right out and do despicable things - theft, adultery, gossip, and character assassination. They just assume that God is like them - he says wonderful things but does not care what we do. They cannot imagine a God who wants praise and right living.

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In the Gospel Jesus is approached by people who say that they want to follow him but either do not realize what sacrifice this requires or have a "but" that keeps them from acting now. "But let me first" is not acceptable to Jesus. Nothing is more important than following him, even something as important as burying a parent, a practice considered to be one of the most important things you can do in Jewish society. For Catholics, burying the dead is one of the corporal works of mercy. Jesus' point is simply

that THE most important things in life cannot come before following him. As soon as we say, "Jesus, I will follow you but"...then we have turned away from being his disciple. As in Amos and the psalm, words are important but they must be backed up with right action.

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