

Homily: June 18, 2021

By Fr. Virgil Petermeier, osc

Today we celebrate God, who must be the center-most treasure of our heart, the light and focus of our eyes. As much as we want God to be God, the God of love, we still entertain other gods in our lives, compromising our true joy. So we come to our compassionate God, crying out, Lord Have Mercy!

Yes, Paul really goes on a big boast. Fortunately, from his other writings, we know that he understands his weaknesses and sufferings as the moments when God's greatness shines forth the clearest. Paul traveled a total of 10,000 miles on four trips of evangelizing from Jerusalem to present-day Syria, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Italy. Paul's life of beatings, shipwrecks and sleepless nights is an inspiration and a fantastic example of what happens when people "store up treasures in heaven;" when we are focused on the things above—the eternal-life issues, the top of which is love. Paul had an amazing love for his many Christian communities, for which he was willing to travel to the death. All this was possible, Paul proclaimed, because he believed, "Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

Jesus, the Christ affirmed in today's Gospel, "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." Jesus' life fit this statement well and reminds me of something with which I wish to conclude this homily. It's a well-known description of love attributed to the former world leader of the Jesuits, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ.

"Nothing is more practical than finding God,
than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything. It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read, whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in Love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything."

I ask you and me, "Does this statement describe what you and I experience?"