

Homily – Youth Spectacular February 19, 2022

It is good that we are here! Right? Are you having fun? So, let us make some tents. Do you think Peter was a fool for suggesting to build tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah? Peter, James and John were terrified. Who wouldn't be?

Jesus had been telling them that he had to suffer his passion and death. Then he told them that they would have to carry their own crosses behind him. What kind of invitation is that? It was basically like saying: "Hey guys, they want to torture me to death and I'm going to let them do it. Come and join me!" What would you respond? It is not surprising that they were confused and discouraged.

But they also knew what happened to those who settled for the alternative: being seduced by money, power and pleasure. Those who follow the ways of the world are always left unsatisfied, and then they want to burden others with their own frustration, causing sin, corruption and death, condemning themselves. They get trapped and confused in the maze of self-gratification, until they are completely lost, leaving behind a trail of bitterness and lies.

In order to be able to follow Jesus through the way of the cross, they needed to know it was worth it. So Jesus offers them a foresight of his glory with the Father. He proves to be the fulfillment of their history, and he promises to be the fullness of life for them. The reward Jesus offered surpassed any form of vain gratification. It was so real that they were terrified. It was enough for John to endure the test and stand next to Mary and the other women at the foot of the cross. James and Peter would follow later. They both died for Jesus.

Consolations are necessary to endure the tests that will inevitably come, but they are graces for which we must pray.

Pope Francis says that salvation scares us. “We need salvation, but at the same time we are afraid of it”, because, “when the Lord comes to save us, we must give everything”, and at that point “he commands; and we fear this”. We don’t want to let go of the illusions of control and security that earthly gratifications provide.

Becoming and forming missionary disciples is a process which requires patience. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus “charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead.” Before they could “go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature,” (Mk 16: 15) they had to achieve what is known as self-mastery, which really means being docile to the Holy Spirit. It began with governing their tongues. One must be quiet in order to listen.

St. James got it, and he tells us in the first reading that our bodies are like horses which need to be tamed and put bits to make them obey us. Before our tongues can speak God’s Word, they need to stop talking about anything that the Holy Spirit does not dictate. The Holy Spirit wishes to speak God’s Word through us. We must first be fed the Word, and the body and blood of Jesus. If you are docile to the Holy Spirit, you will not have to worry too much about what you are going to say to other youth in order to bring them closer to Jesus. It will be given to you by the Holy Spirit, as you build communion carrying out the mission to spread the good news of Jesus.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe guide you through synodality, encouraging you to climb the mountain with Jesus and listen to Him, as He speaks through the person next to you.