



Homily for 3/24/2019

Third Sunday of Lent, Ancient Form
(Ephesians 5: 1-9 / Luke 11: 14-28)

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Humility, Obedience, and Thanks

In today's Gospel, in which Jesus is accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. By wit and solid logic, he overcomes their doubts and reveals the truth that He in fact casts out demons by the finger of God, and therefore He is God in their midst. But He warns against pride and disobedience. When the Lord has slain the enemy of our soul, it is not for us to take the victory as our own. If we claim that we have been cleansed by our own power, we fall prey to a worse fate in that the devil will capitalize on our prideful stance and devour us whole. Humility is the key to living in the Lord. Not to us Lord, but to your name give the Glory. Obedience is necessary. It is not enough for us to have carried the Lord even in our bodies, but rather for us to hear His word and keep it - lest it bear no fruit. The greatest way to make the devil flee and stay gone is through love of humility and obedience.

St. Paul reminds us in the Epistle that we are called to be children of God and therefore to walk in love. It should be obvious what that should not mean. But just in case it is not so obvious, he gives us a list of things to avoid: fornication, which means sexual sin outside of marriage; covetousness, which means jealousy and envy, and which St. Paul calls idolatry because we make the things of this world out to be gods. Obscenity and vulgarity should not be ours. So much for what should be obvious not to do. But what would he have us do if we are children of God and walk in love? Give thanks. It seems like a trite and dismissive thing. Give thanks. And yet, it should be the heart of all we do. We should be a thankful people, because what we boast of being, children of God, is not something that we merited on our own. It is a gift bestowed on us by the graciousness of God. To know and love the one who created us is only possible because he broke down the wall of enmity that sin had created. For you were heretofore in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light: Give thanks. that is what we do in the Eucharist. We give great thanksgiving to God for his saving work. But at the end of Mass, we are sent: *Ite, Missa est.* We are sent to go and do likewise. Give thanks: live the virtue of gratitude. Every one of us stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, those who gave us life, who nurtured that life, who gave us the light of education and worked long hours to provide food and shelter. We have so many people to thank - those who have labored in this world to provide the good things we enjoy every day Give thanks!

I give you a challenge, then, to live the virtue of gratitude. Thank God *every day*. Come to daily Mass if you can. Then thank someone different each day this week, whether it be your parents, your teachers, your spouse, your mentor, or your friend. Give thanks and recognize how they have impacted your life. In this way, we will be humble before the Lord, we will be obedient to His call to gratitude, and we will be cooperators in His saving work by which all evil is cast out from our souls, our bodies, our families and our world.

May Jesus Christ be praised!