

Sunday Homily

Title: Homily on Jesus Commands Hate?

Date: September 7, 2025

Sunday: 23rd Sunday of the Year (C cycle)

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

By: Fr. Bob Schmitz

Text: St. Luke draws a unique meaning from the crucifixion. The Lord's Passion was a trial, a test. Could Jesus live through the suffering—and die—while keeping faith in the God of love? Could he live—and die—his own teaching? Could love overcome hate? Could forgiveness respond to extreme hurt? Would he find peace when facing violence? Luke shows that Jesus passed the test. Only Luke records these things: Soon after he was hung on the cross, Jesus said: "Forgive them for they know not what they do." Then, suffering on the cross, Jesus saved the repentant thief. And at death's door, Jesus found peace. He cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Peace in the hands of a loving God!

Passing that same test is part of OUR discipleship. Each of us is called to take up the cross. We need to look into its meaning. The cross upends everything. You see, Jesus did not just die for us. Jesus was a victim of a judicial murder. The political and religious powers of his day put him to death. Luke records more trials before more officials than the other evangelists—before the chief priests, before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, then before King Herod, and then back to Pilate (Lk 22:54-23:25). All the political and religious powers of the day sat in judgment.

They thought he was a revolutionary. He was! But he was not a political or religious revolutionary. His was a revolution of the heart that transforms all interaction. Their power was

violent; he remained peaceful. Their power was angry; he remained calm. Their power was deceitful; he held onto the truth. Their power expressed hatred; Jesus never deviated from love. After the Lord's death, any disciple with power over others must re-orient that power to correspond to the Lord's way. Power over others can be used only after acknowledging that God made each person in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27), that each person carries the breath of God in their soul (Gen 2:7). The salvation the Lord won restores everyone's sense of worth. For the Christian disciple, all human interaction starts with the knowledge of each person's infinite worth.

Understanding the cross helps us understand the Lord's *family values*. In his day, family authority and power resided in the husband and father. It's called the patriarchal family. He had TOTAL control over his wife and children, his servants, and slaves. Women and children were not even what we would call second class. That type of family was oppressive. Jesus expected his followers who were patriarchs to change their hearts, to see the dignity of everyone, to discover the worth of everyone, especially the dignity and worth of his wife and children. The heart must change.

On the cross, Jesus demonstrated ultimate liberation. Let's go back to the idea of a trial or test. Can we live the faith in the worst of circumstances as he did? Can we live the Gospel through hard times? Difficult situations? When challenged? When betrayed? When hurt? Let me start with a light happening. The official church demands we hear confessions of children before their first communion. I enjoy hearing their excuses for their nastiness: "My

little brother made me hit him.” “My parents made me mad, so I kicked the dog.” Such thinking continues until the fourth or fifth grade.

Of course, as we grow older our situations get much more complex. People do violence and can be abusive. We can experience betrayal. Tongues get sharper; a few well-chosen words can cut deeply. Deceit and lies attempt to change our perception of reality. And social change can knock us off our bearings. It transpires so quickly that it is hard to withhold judgment until we can assess its goodness or evil. Would that we could deflect it as those young children do? “They” made me mean and nasty.

But here’s the test. Can we enjoy the same liberation that the Lord did? Will we allow what happens around us change our way of being in this world? Do the actions of others throw us off our bearings? Does it sap our energy; change our mood; steal our time? Does it disconnect us from our faith—from goodness, from truth, from charity? In short, can we pass the test Jesus passed? A revolution of the heart is the ultimate liberation. If we worship the One who passed His test on the cross, we know we don’t have to let others set our agenda. We can respond to our situation as Christ did.

St. Paul wrote these words. Let me first confess that it has taken me a long time to get my mind around them. He wrote: “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). When we receive the Lord in the Eucharist, we receive the crucified Lord. I live no longer I. We live in Christ, and he lives in us. His love can transform us whatever our circumstances. In the end, we can reach the goal of it all, allowing our spirits to discover peace in the hands of God.