

Into the Mind of God

- I) Challenging, Difficult questions to a disciple is:
 - A) Where is God when disaster strikes?
 - B) Why does God allow suffering and pain?
 - C) Why do terrible things happen to good people?

- II) Whether it be a personal disaster, a personal tragedy
Or a natural disaster, like Hurricane Harvey, hurting 1,000s.

- III) The suffering of 1,000s can cause us to question our faith, some to doubt, and atheists offer it as proof there is no God.

- IV) Today's Gospel addresses this very question.

- V) This week a continuation last week's Gospel: "Who do you say I am?"
 - A) Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"
 - B) Jesus proclaims Him Peter, the Rock upon which the Church is to be built, and gives Peter authority over the Church.
 - C) Barely a breath later, Jesus announces His coming Passion and Death

- VI) Peter, Newly Proclaimed Head of the Church
 - A) Pulls Jesus aside . . . *and rebukes Jesus!*
 - B) Did you catch that? Peter.... Rebukes Jesus!

VII) We can sympathize, even empathize, with Peter

A) Peter does what any of us would do

B) Of course Peter doesn't want his friend, the Messiah, to suffer a torturous death on the cross

C) Makes no sense, what could be the purpose? Where is God's plan?

D) And we've been there too

1) The child killed in an automobile accident

2) The young parent dying of cancer

3) 10,000s homeless in Houston

4) What is the purpose, what is God's plan?

E) Our first lesson: The Mind of God is a vast, infinite ocean, and we have puny 5 gallon buckets.

1) The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ is beyond Peter's comprehension

2) If it is true of Peter, it is true of us

3) Some of God's actions are beyond our comprehension.

4) When you and I are challenged beyond your comprehension, recall that God is God, and we are not

Remember how far beyond Peter's understanding Jesus' P,D,R

5) And stay open to the likelihood that your challenge is similarly beyond your comprehension

F) Too often, however, we are like Peter: We rebuke God, and prayed to Him with a better plan, **our** plan.

VIII) And that's exactly what Peter does

- A) Demonstrating the virtues of courage and loyalty
- B) God forbid! No such thing shall ever happen to you!
- C) ... and Peter get the most stingy rebuke in all of the Gospels.
 - 1) "Get behind me Satan!"

IX) Jesus explains, "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

- A) But of course, we are human!
- B) Jesus teaches, "You must take up your cross and die to your merely human self, and rise with me as a New Creation
- C) United to Christ in Sacrament, filled generously with His Holy Spirit, and in Communion with God
- D) We are called to think and act as God does.

X)(Review)

- A) Lesson 1: Some of the actions of God are beyond our 5 gallon buckets of understanding.
- B) Lesson 2: Nonetheless, as disciples we are called to think and act with the Mind of God.

XI) But how do we know the Mind of God?

- A) How do you know what I'm thinking now?

- B) I give you my thoughts in Words
- C) We see the brilliance in St. John's Gospel, calling Jesus "The Word of God"
- D) The full, complete expression of the Mind in God

XII) Why it is essential for us as disciples to READ the Gospels, to PRAY the Gospels, to MEDITATE on the Gospels....

- A) In the morning and in the evening
- B) On the way to work and after work
- C) Discuss them with our friends and family
- D) Pray them and meditate on their mysteries with the Rosary
- E) Make them a part of our daily discussion, decisions, and life
- F) The Gospels are given to us to know Christ, the Living Word of God, the full expression of the Mind of God.

XIII) What does this look like in practice? What does it look like when people think and act with the mind of God?

- A) We live in an increasingly secular culture, and disciples in other ages have also been challenged by the secular world around them.
 - 1) St. Kateri Tekakaweitha -- the human thing would have been for her to give in to her adoptive parents' punishments, accept marriage, and "get along" with her adoptive tribe.
 - 2) Instead, like Jeremiah in our first reading, she persevered against the ridicule, remained true to her faith, her Catholicism, and her vow of chastity, despite deep personal hardship and retribution.

B) We live in times where race defines nearly every public discussion

- 1) St. Katharine Drexel lived before racial equality or human rights were even terms. She could have done the human thing, funding charities while enjoying the privileged life of a Philadelphia socialite.
- 2) Thinking with the mind of God, she died to self, gave it all up, and her very self and love too, to a people others placed in a race category, and called uneducable. She brought them Christ, the Faith, and higher education too.

C) We live in divisive times. I needed go into the polarization that poisons our public debate. The human thing is to take sides, and look for every opportunity to score points and victories.

- 1) St. John Paul II could have done the human thing, and, when as a Professor of Philosophy was confronted time and again with angry, disruptive arguments for Marxism, could have returned argument in kind.
- 2) Thinking with God, John Paul welcomed angry detractors with Love, seeing in them the very image of God. He explained when you are merely the vessel trying to accurately explain God's divine truth, you have nothing to win, nothing to fear, nothing to conquer. Have faith in the truth!

D) And we see people thinking as God does this week, in the outpouring of aid, prayer, and love to the victims of Hurricane Harvey, and steadfast Faith of the victims.

- 1) For example, people in shelters who have lost everything and face an uncertain future, could give in to human despair
- 2) Have you seen the videos?
- 3) Hundreds of people in shelters, praising God in song, led by Gospel singers Victoria White and Marquist Taylor
 - (a)“I will sing of your love forever”

XIV) Next week, you will be given an opportunity to be heroes, to think with the mind of God

- A) Our second collection next week will be for the Catholic Charities Relief Efforts for the Victims of Hurricane Harvey
- B) Encourage you to donate to one of the best emergency relief organizations – very little overhead and an excellent reputation.

XV) Our two lessons:

- A) To acknowledge sometimes God’s actions are beyond our 5 gallon understanding
- B) To nonetheless strive to think and act not as human beings do, but as God does
- C) Still, we will inevitably fall short
- D) And that’s Okay, that’s expected.
- E) The Risen Christ is ready to forgive us in mercy, to encourage us with His Spirit, and to strengthen us in Sacraments.
- F) We turn to the celebration of our Eucharist, where Christ shares His very self with us, fills us with His Holy Spirit, and gently lifts us into the presence, life, and mind of God.