

HOMILY ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B)

**THE WORLD AS YOU SEE IT IS PASSING AWAY**

What have you on earth that is making you to be puffed off? Nothing on earth lasts. What have you to brag about? Is it wealth, health, position of authority, good health, nice and peaceful wife or husband, wisdom, intelligence or even pious life? All of these are passing away speedily and we are also passing away with them. Humility will always remind us that the position we hold today is the position another had retired from and which we shall hand over to others very soon. Your wealth too, if nothing happens to it while still alive, you must one day, which may be very soon, leave it for the living; while you go to answer your creator. Good health is a gift from the almighty God. He gave it to you not because you are so wonderful but because He chose to and he can take it at any time especially when we decide to brag about it as if it were given to because of our excellence.

Our epoch has experienced a greater height of technological development than any other in history that the world is rightly described as a global village. Someone can just stay in the comfort of his room and make any form of transaction his he needed to make in any part of the world, chat with friends from every part of the world. You can stay in your room and obtain every certificate you want with little or no stress; everything online. This development is found in every area of human endeavor. This advancement has its pros and cons. For instance,

because with computer they get at ease, whatever they want and sometimes, at the time they want it, some people have begun to doubt the existence of God and that is why we see some people who claim that they are atheists. Some others though do not profess atheism, imply it by their pattern of life.

Some live as if money is everything and can stop at nothing trying to acquire it. They can do anything humanly possible (killing, maiming, stealing drug trafficking and even denial of God) to acquire it. Others believe that power makes them demigods. This group, like the first can do anything to get to the position of authority. They can blackmail, backbite, perform ritual acts, procure charms, deny their faith and God etc. But even if they achieve their ambition, they are not happy but on the contrary, they get frustrated because they abandon the source of happiness which is God to pursue frivolity. This explains why, paradoxically, this epoch, in spite of the advancement in technology, we have more lunatics roaming the streets, more drug addicts, more suicides, all caused by frustration.

The lives St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Augustine and St. Paul and the likes should serve as example to us. Our souls are immaterial and because of that, material things cannot satisfy it. Hence, St. Augustine said, addressing God, 'You have made us for yourself alone, our souls will never rest until they rest in you.' Confirming this statement, St. Ignatius of Loyola who, though highly learned, and had read several books, had never had interest in reading spiritual book until when he fell sick and was admitted into a

catholic hospital, finding nothing of his favourite books to read, he however, been accustomed to reading, had to find something to read and the only available books were some inspiring work of the holy writers. He was given the life of Christ to read. A book he copiously read with an unusual interest and discovered that its memory never left him even after reading and that it gave him inner joy, fulfillment and contentment which cannot be put to words and which other books do not give.

We have very limited time here on earth but unfortunately only the wise few have found this out. Every day, every hour, in fact, every second brings us closer to the grave and only few are preparing for that great but dreadful day. It is because of this that St. Paul is reminding us that our time is short. A hundred years compared to eternity is just like a microsecond.

The people of Nineveh as we see in the first reading realized their mistakes when Jonah preached to them and they repented in ash and sackcloth, proclaiming fast. Fasting, putting on of ash and sackcloth is a signs of reparation that necessarily accompanies repentance. It is a sign of humility and if it is properly done, the aim which is to make the flesh surrender to the spirit, is achieved. Each and every one of us must have one spiritual challenges or the other that to contend with. Like the Ninevites, we should speedily run to God for assistance because without His grace we cannot do anything.

In the gospel of today, we saw John the Baptist being arrested and Jesus being aware of his arrest refused to fight back or even

question the reason for his arrest. On the contrary, He went away and continued to proclaim the good news. It was as if He was saying, 'that is his destiny.' He has fought the good fight to the finish, he has run the race to the end let him go for the crown that awaits him in the kingdom of my Father. His is a won game, I must continue my task so as to win more souls because my time is running short.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, each and every one of us has been entrusted with responsibility which we are expected to carry out within a set time. We are running out of time. This precious gift called time which the Lord has given gratuitously to us has been wasted in the past but it not yet too late as far as we are still alive many things could still be done to put things right. All that the Lord requires from us is to sincerely say, "I am sorry." Let us put off our pride and say "I am sorry." Sin, especially the sin of pride, is rebellion against God and His authority over us.