

“WHAT is the world coming to?” (Homily)

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February 17, 2019 -- 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Jeremiah 17:5-8; Luke 6:17, 20-26

“WHAT is the world coming to?”

If I’ve heard this question once, I’ve heard it a thousand times.

When I was young, I remember my friends asking me this question when protests turned ugly in the ‘60’s, and when kids overdosed on LSD, and when Bobby Kennedy was shot. I could go on for hours, so often was this question raised back then, in fear, and anger, and anguish.

In latter days, I’ve been asked the same question -- over and over -- about many things: the morning-after pill, the HIV epidemic, the decline of marriage, child abuse, spousal abuse, sexual harassment, clergy sexual abuse, opioid abuse, fentanyl, young deaths (and even younger deaths), bullying, suicide, the mutilation of children with gender dysphoria, ISIS, beheadings, sex trafficking, starving children (in Syria, Yemen, and even Venezuela), and now, INFANTICIDE: the butchering of children, the culling of the weak, EUGENICS eerily similar to the practices of Nazi Germany, defeated at such great cost to our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, witnesses to Buchenwald and Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.

"WHAT is the world coming to?" The question RINGS in my ears when I sleep, when I wake, when I greet my friends, and when I leave them.

The subject of the question may vary widely, but my answer is always the same (and will always be the same): "There is NOTHING NEW under the sun." It is NOW, as it was THEN, and WILL BE forever. THEN, it was Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, and Nero's Rome... NOW, it is Amsterdam, Bangkok, San Francisco, and my own 42nd Street... Any distinctions among them are mere hair-splittings.

It is now, as it was then, and will be forever. Satan is afoot, and his lie has not changed: "You will be like gods." You need not trouble yourself with God's silly laws, with marriage and other commitments! Eat, drink, and be merry! (For tomorrow you will surely die.) You need not trouble yourself with unplanned pregnancies: Simply terminate them! You need

not trouble yourself with less-than-perfect babies: Kill them! Kill them as they are being born! There is nothing new under the sun! The ancient Romans left unwanted babies in the rubbish. Has anything changed? Is it not NOW, as it was THEN?

And therefore -- listen to me carefully -- Holy Scripture is as relevant TODAY as was THEN, and WILL BE forever, for the world has NOT changed -- NOR WILL IT change -- despite our fantasies of human progress. Jeremiah -- the "weeping prophet" from whose words we read today -- is as fresh now as he was then, six centuries before Christ: "Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the LORD." Can anyone deny this?

And thus, too, the gospel of Jesus Christ is as fresh NOW as it was THEN: two-thousand years ago! Jesus Christ is the same YESTERDAY, TODAY, and FOREVER! Thus, follow Him! REJECT Satan, and all his lies, and all his empty promises. FIGHT the INSANITY of INFANTICIDE -- and all the rest!

WHAT is the world coming to? NOTHING! The world is coming to NOTHING!

But YOU can come to SOMETHING!

YOU can come to SOMETHING, if you follow the Lord Jesus Christ, as hard as it may be, as hard as the world pushes back on you! Do not be afraid! Let today's Gospel be your hope -- as it is mine -- as together, we fight the good fight: "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. REJOICE and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven." Amen!

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Thus says the LORD:
Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings,
who seeks his strength in flesh,
whose heart turns away from the LORD.
He is like a barren bush in the desert
that enjoys no change of season,
but stands in a lava waste,
a salt and empty earth.

Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
whose hope is the LORD.
He is like a tree planted beside the waters
that stretches out its roots to the stream:
it fears not the heat when it comes;
its leaves stay green;
in the year of drought it shows no distress,
but still bears fruit.

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who are now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are now weeping,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you,
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.
Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!
Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.
For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.
But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are filled now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will grieve and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false
prophets in this way.”