
Homily on the 12th Sunday of Luke

January 18, 2015

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! Amen!

This has been a week of deep groaning – not for my physical ailments – but in spirit; a week of spiritual groaning.

It has been, for me, a week of profound disappointment.

Someone said, “One cannot offend, make war, kill in the name of one's own religion – that is, in the name of God....”

Yet, clearly one can, does, and has.

And, clearly, one single religion has this as a practical (rather than formal) article of faith.

There are times for diplomacy. And there are times for truth.

Let me share a truth with you – and please listen closely. True religion does not become offended by insult. True religious people respond to insult with love.

But when false conceptions of God lead to violent reactions to humor – however, sick and offensive the humor may be – then the violent reaction is *not* of God, Who is Love.

Only someone who has cut himself off from God could become so deformed that he would engage in violence to stop humor.

People who commit acts of violence, whether in response to insult, humor, or anything else, worship themselves above all things.

This was what I wanted to hear this week – and did not . . . not from any corner of the earth.

Religion is not a concept or idea. It is about the altar, love, and

sacrifice. It is not about self.

Thus the words of the epistle reading today from St. Paul to the Hebrews ring true:

Brethren, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their lives, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That, my brothers and sisters, *is the Truth* – capital 'T' – not the pap, the cause of my spiritual agony this past week, that you heard on the news.

I must add that I seriously doubt it is coincident that today's homily in the *Prologue of Ochrid* is “About Danger” . . . and that the first biblical quote states: "Gird your loins and light your lamps" (St. Luke 12:33).

Indeed we should take St. Luke's warning to heart. We must “gird [our] loins” and keep our lamps lit – if not full of oil, lest we be left behind.

The final prayer in the homily should be taken into our hearts, into the depth of our hearts:

O Lord, pure and sinless, the hearth of all virtues, help us to gird ourselves with restraint and to walk the narrow path to You with lighted candles, which You brought into the world.

May our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ bless us.

May our Holy Theotokos save us.

Amen.