

## **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 02-13-2022**

“Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the one...whose heart turns away from the Lord.” This is a warning that must be taken very seriously by everyone.

Many people today have embraced, in most cases without a great deal of consideration, a particular heresy that the Church calls indifferentism.

Indifferentism is the belief held by some that no one religion or philosophy is superior to another.

According to the Catholic Church, religious indifferentism is the term given to all those theories, which, for one reason or another, deny that it is the duty of man to worship God by believing and practicing the one true religion – namely, Catholicism.

This statement makes many people, even some very devout Catholics, very uneasy and sometimes even quite upset.

Regardless of the reason why it upsets some people, we should at least attempt to rationally understand it. And then if one still holds fast to indifferentism then it should be taken to its logical conclusion.

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity – God-made-man, came to earth in the fullness of time for the sole purpose of reconciling humanity to the Father through his life, death and resurrection.

And while he lived on earth he established the Catholic Church so that he could be known by every generation so that we could follow him without any confusion and someday go to heaven.

Therefore, Catholicism is the ordinary means of salvation. It is the path that God deemed, in his infinite wisdom, to be the best way to heaven.

If anyone objects to this and makes the claim that a person can be saved by any religion whatsoever, they are essentially denying the cross of Jesus Christ and are telling God that what he did two thousand years ago was stupid because it really wasn't necessary.

It's essentially a rejection of Jesus Christ.

So then someone will inevitably ask, "Are you then saying that a Protestant can't go to heaven?" And I can answer with an emphatic, "No, that is not at all what I am saying!"

Even if I were to quote Pope Benedict and say there is no salvation outside of the Church, I'm still not saying that only Catholics go to heaven. And yet, inevitably, someone will leave here today and say that is exactly what I said.

But hear this: When a properly baptized Protestant enters the Catholic Church at Easter time after having gone through some form of Catholic formation, usually RCIA, we do not re-baptize them because the Catholic Church already recognizes that every properly baptized person is a member of the Body of Christ, which is the Catholic Church.

To the extent that they understand and embrace Catholic faith and morals determines the extent to which they are in union with the Catholic Church but God doesn't expect them to know and to believe what they can't yet know.

I've said it before and sadly I will say it again, there are Protestants sitting in their pews at their Protestant service this weekend that are more in communion with the Catholic Church than are many Catholics who pick and choose what they believe based on how it fits into their lives.

So yes, Protestants can go to heaven.

And so one might ask, “What about non-Christians? Can they go to heaven?”

Yes! If they are truly seeking truth but through no fault of their own, and that is the tricky part, they never come to Christ and his Church in this life they can still be saved but they will be saved by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – mysteriously through his Catholic Church.

However, we should all be more concerned with our own salvation than with anyone else’s because we can’t give what we don’t have.

If we who are Catholic are not in union with the Church, which is to say not in a state of grace, then we probably won’t bring any grace into the lives of others either.

We need to be right with God ourselves before we can really begin to help others get right with God.

There was a scene from the movie Molokai about the life of St. Damian where a Protestant leper, whom Fr. Damian had visited for months, asked, “Do you really believe that only Catholics go to heaven?” And St. Damian responded, “I don’t know about that but I do know that Catholics can go to heaven.”

“Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the one...whose heart turns away from the Lord.”

If any of us has turned away from the Lord even in the slightest by embracing indifferentism then today is the day to turn back to him so that someday we can go to heaven and we can help others get there as well.