

22A 2017 SML
MT 16:21-17

The Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are written with Jesus and the Apostles on a journey from Galilee in the north to Jerusalem in the south. The framework for this journey was three separate, plain as day predictions made by our Blessed Lord of His passion, death and resurrection, the first of which is found in this morning's gospel.

Up until now:

- ✓ The Apostles had already missed the veiled hints our Blessed Lord had given about his passion, death and resurrection;
- ✓ They were slow to recognize that the Messiah would suffer as Isaiah had prophesied;
- ✓ They missed what Jesus said when he cleansed the Temple, that He was the Temple of God, and that the Temple would be destroyed and rebuilt in three days;
- ✓ And they missed His teaching that, the serpent lifted up in the desert, was a prophecy of how He would be lifted up on the cross.

But now that Peter, who was chosen to be the head of the Church, openly confessed Jesus' divinity, Jesus openly made the first of three predictions. Three times Jesus dragged His

Cross into conversation with his Apostles and explained the necessity of the Cross, and three times they began fighting either with Him or each other because the Apostles did not see that the bigger picture, that the issue was salvation:

- ✓ After the second passion prediction, they started fighting with each other over who was the greatest;
- ✓ After the third passion prediction, they started fighting with James and John who wanted a seat, one at his right and one at his left,
- ✓ And after this first passion prediction, Peter started fighting with Jesus. Puffed up with the authority that had just been given to him in last Sunday's gospel ("You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church"), Peter took Jesus aside and reprimanded Him. "God forbid that anything like this should ever happen to you." Because Peter was thinking in terms of a political Messiah. He was not thinking in terms of salvation.

This Sunday's Gospel is clearly about salvation. Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to come after me . . ."

- ✓ Where Jesus was the first to go,
- ✓ and paved the way for others to follow,
- ✓ to "come after,"

was heaven. The last line of today's gospel could not be any clearer: "For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his

Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."

Judgment day for every one of us will be a good day, insofar as it will be the fairest day of your life. Students never forget how disappointed they were when they did not receive the grade they felt they earned. Well they won't feel that way on judgment day. Employees never forget how disappointed they were when they did not get the raise or the promotion they felt they earned. They won't feel that way on judgment day. How is it that adulterers and murderers and all kinds of rotten people live the life of Reilly while innocent children suffer?

Questions there will always be, but the answer is found in today's gospel, as our Blessed Lord could not be clearer: "For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct." There will be no curve. There will be no favoritism. There will be no breaks. You will be judged on your conduct and everything else that matters.

Your conduct contains both good and bad. Good works and sin. More good works than sin, and you get in. More sin than good works, and you get purgatory. I've committed plenty of sins over these past 55 years, for which I am truly sorry, and

have confessed. But just being sorry doesn't expiate sin; it doesn't make up for sin. Good works expiate sin. Good works make up for sin. Suffering makes up for sin. One reason why I do as many good works as I can is to make up for my sins because I am going to be judged on my conduct, good and bad. I want more good works in my conduct than I have sins.

When you determine how much of your income you want to invest now for your retirement, you want to invest as much as possible. You don't want a zero balance or to be caught short of money in your retirement.

It's the same way with salvation. You want to do as many good works as possible because you don't want to be caught short of good works on judgment day, because judgment day will be the fairest day of your life, and you will absolutely agree with Our Blessed Lord, because Our Blessed Lord knows you better than you know yourself, and everything will be taken into account, and nothing will be left out.

Time magazine carried an interesting article by Garrison Keillor, entitled, "Faith at the Speed of Light," wherein he quotes Microsoft icon Bill Gates. According to Gates, "Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday

morning.” This statement illustrates very well the words of Our Blessed Lord when he said, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.” (MT 19:23)

It’s easier for some people to judge Bill Gates than to judge themselves. I went on the internet and found 2,827,956 search results regarding Bill Gates and salvation. What a waste of time, because Bill’s judgment day will be the fairest day of his life. Bill Gates will be repaid for his conduct. Whether or not the billions Gates gave to charity will be enough good works to make up for his arrogance I need not even consider, because I know his judgment day will be the fairest day of his life. The writers of those search results should spend as much time evaluating their own conduct and their own chance at heaven. And you and I should do the same. It’s not our place to judge anyone. Leave that for the Son of Man.

“For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct” – the number of good works vs. the number of sins, and everything else that matters.

You know, it's not too late to volunteer for the parish picnic, and there's a second collection for Hurricane Harvey relief. Take part!