

Homily
Monday of the 6th Week in OT
February 12, 2024

Our Bishop's pontifical motto upon his installation as our 11th bishop of the Diocese of Covington is, "In all things, give thanks. He took this from 1st Thessalonians which says, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." *1 Thessalonians 16-18*

James, in our first reading, tells us to, "Consider it all joy...when we encounter various trials."

That doesn't sound like much fun. In fact, it sounds downright disastrous. Think of all the things that happen each and every day that warrant anything but thanks; stubbing your toe, being stopped by a red light, reaching for the milk only to find out the container is empty. And then we watch the news to see only frightful events happening every day all around the world and even in our own neighborhoods.

But that is the world we live in. God created it good, then He created us good, then we, with our free will, believed we were smarter than God, and chose our own way.

All the evil in the world happens because of free will. And this is part of God's plan. He loves us just where we are, in our sinfulness, selfish and prideful. But He loves us too much to leave us in this state of separation from Him. He calls us to be perfect. And we strive for perfection, never being able to attain it, but growing in holiness every step of the way.

And we give thanks in all things, good and bad, righteous and evil, because this is part of God's plan. We don't understand it; how can we. God is perfect and infinite; we are imperfect and finite. And we rely on God for everything. We are who we are because God made us this way.

James goes on to remind us that it is through the testing of our faith that we find perseverance, and through perseverance, perfection. It is the struggle that helps us grow. It is in the fire that we are refined. So, we persevere in faith.

The Pharisees don't understand this struggle. They are unwilling to believe in God's plan, just as the Israelites rebelled in the desert. They cling to human traditions, placing their confidence in their own self-righteousness instead of the One Whom they claim to follow. They are missing the point. God has a plan. Our plan, without following God's Will falls short and leaves us behind.

In all things, give thanks. God is good. God is love. And we are blessed by His plan, even though we may not be able to see it or understand. God is in charge; we just need to follow His lead. He gives us His Word proclaimed. He gives us the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. We just need to have faith and give thanks in all things.