

Homily  
Friday of the 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
July 12, 2024

Sheep among wolves. How can we remain innocent and vulnerable, simple as doves, yet shrewd as serpents. It seems a contradiction. What Jesus is saying is, “remain pure and undefiled, without sin, yet go into a world that is treacherous, full of temptation, where sinners abound.

Many have stated that this passage requires wisdom, the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. It also requires us to be meek, someone who shows patient restraint. We know what’s out there; we know the treachery that exists in the world. We only need to watch the news. Yesterday, in Florence, there was a murder-suicide. Last week, there was a mass shooting, also in Florence, where four died, three were critically injured and the perpetrator killed himself.

We receive phishing emails all the time; scammers reach out to us in all forms of communication. Sometimes we learn by the example of others. Sometimes we learn the hard way: “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” We try to teach our children about the ‘ways of the world.’ Yet we all have to live in this world of deceit and evil.

What can we do? Can we rely on our friends and neighbors? Can we rely on family? Sometimes. The reality is that we can only truly rely on Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. We can trust in Him. Trust is earned, but Jesus has earned it from the beginning of time. We know we can trust and rely on Jesus because He loves us and He died for us. He has given us everything. All we are and all we do is because of the gifts God has given us. And then we take these gifts and go into a world that doesn’t understand, and even tries to tell us we are crazy for believing in a God who isn’t here, Who is invisible. But we know. We trust. We can come to Jesus, in His Word and in His Sacraments. That is why we can be sent into the world “...like sheep in the midst of wolves.”

Today is a new day, a gift that is given to us by our all-knowing and all-loving God. Today we come to Mass to receive Jesus and be healed and strengthened to go into the world. Today, when we are dismissed, we can confidently enter into the world of wolves and remain as sheep, innocent and pure, knowing the God of the Universe is with us every step of the way, until we stand in front of Him, face-to-Face, and hear those glorious words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”