

Homily – March 29th, 2019. Mass with seminarians

It is simply normal for us to spend our lives seeking **safety, stability and comfort**. Whenever something pleases us, our natural desire is to have it forever. However, we are often tricked into believing that we can get what we really want from the things of this world. Pope Francis summarizes those things in three: **money, power and fame**.

The book of the prophet Hosea first tells his story with his unfaithful wife, as a symbol of the relationship between God and the people of Israel. It describes three moments: **first love, separation and reunion**. It can also be applied to each one of us. In our case: our calling, sin and continuous conversion. Calling the people to again put their trust in God alone, the reading says: “Assyria will not save us, nor shall we have horses to mount; we shall say no more, ‘Our god,’ to the work of our hands.” Hosea is calling us to “collapse” through our guilt. In other words: **Repent wholeheartedly!** We must admit that neither the approval of others, influence, nor a comfortable life, will grant us the safety that our hearts desire. Life on earth is passing. “Our hearts are restless until they can find peace in God.” (St. Augustine) “God alone suffices”, and He alone can fulfill our lives. (St. Teresa of Avila)

In the gospel reading today, Jesus is in Jerusalem. He had been preaching throughout Galilee and Judea for the last three years and had just been proclaimed King by the people upon his arrival in the city. His challenge to the behavior of the established leaders of the people is reaching a highpoint. Upon his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, he overturns the tables of the money changers and

creates an uproar that seems out of control. He has become unbearable to the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the scribes. How would we react to someone publicly calling us “the hypocrites”? They are making every effort to test him publicly, trying to ridicule him, so as to save their position, their fame and their way of life. Today it is the turn of a scribe to test Jesus. However, when this man gets his response, he is honest enough to **admit** that Jesus is right. Unexpectedly, he finds hope. Even at the brink of committing the worst of sins –plotting to kill the Son of God himself– the mercy of Christ finds a way into the scribe’s heart and tells him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” **A slight change of heart** was enough for Jesus to begin to rescue him.

Pope Francis says, “We know what it means to be seduced by money, fame and power. For this reason, the Church gives us the gift of this Lenten season, invites us to conversion, offering but one certainty: he is waiting for us and wants to heal our hearts of all that tears us down. **He is the God who has a name: Mercy.** His name is our wealth, his name is what makes us famous, his name is our power...”

“The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” And “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” What is stopping you? In what ways are you putting Jesus to the test in your life? **Let him challenge you!**

May Our Lady of Guadalupe intercede for us before the Holy Spirit, for Him to soften our hearts in these last few weeks of Lent.