

A Short Teaching on Punishment

by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on this 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: GN 18:20-32; PS 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8; COL 2:12-14; LK 11:1-13

When someone is in love they believe the Other even if the Other seems to be ridiculous or obstinate. Further still, as an enduring nature of love, even when the Other is completely false or seemingly false we remain in the hope things will come out right (morally positive version).

When someone is covetous they believe the Model of Covetousness even when the Model is ridiculous or obstinate. Further still, as an enduring nature of covetousness, even when Model is completely false we remain in the hope things will come as to that which I covet (immoral version).

What we want mutes our desire to know what we should know. Who we choose to follow, therefore, is of supreme importance because we tend to turn off our intellect and act by obedience alone. The concluding line of the Gospel reading today reveals a **gift of knowing** that one might believe without muting the intellect or any other good senses given us: *If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven **give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him?*

Paul's letter to the Colossians describes the **gift of liberation (salvation)** which voids charges against us. *Having forgiven us all our transgressions; obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, he (Christ) also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.*

The Abraham Intercedes for Sodom should be understood in the same framework. Abraham intercedes for the city (immediate for his nephew Lot and generally for the entire population). Abraham seeks a way of rescue not a way of punishment and destruction. The three Prophets listed here also provided a path to freedom and gift. Even as the remnant of righteousness dwindles from 50 to 10 and eventually to 1, Lot alone, destruction does not come until any reform is no longer possible.

Model of Covetous – The Four Errors of Sodom		
Sex as a weapon and projection of power	Gen 19, 4f	
False worship; Ignore own sinfulness	Isaiah 1:9f; 3:9	Make justice your aim
Prideful, Wealthy w/o sharing w/ poor	Ezekiel 16: 46-51	Ez 16:53 I will restore Sodom.
Adultery, living lies, alliance with the wicked	Jeremiah 23:14	Yoke of Jeremiah –v- Yoke of Jesus

CCC 2267. Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “**the death penalty is inadmissible** because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person”, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.

Following Model of Covetousness who binds you? Ask the Holy Spirit who desires Mercy not sacrifice.

Peace be with you,

Deacon Gerry