July 16, 2021 Gospel Matthew 121-8

Homily by Deacon Luis P. Villanueva for 8AM Mass on Friday, at St. Joseph Church, Devine, TX.-Fr. Antonio Hernandez, Pastor.: -In the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, amen.

Short Version:

The Lord teaches us today that it is just as important, for our salvation, to love our neighbor and be reconciled with him as it is to offer sacrifices, worship and praise to the Lord on Sundays.

The Lord God will not hear prayer if we are not reconciled. First we must reconcile and love ourselves from the heart before bringing offerings to the Lord.

Jesus teaches us that our Father in Heaven is pleased when we follow all the rituals and traditions of the Church and attend Mass, but that these have no real value when our hearts our souls remain unchanged and do not have love, compassion and mercy for our neighbor.

While our obedience to God's Law of the Sabbath (Sunday for Christian Catholics) is required, our love and mercy towards our neighbor is an equal requirement of the same Law. (Love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself, is the summary of the Ten Commandments). That is the bigger picture and purpose of the Law that Jesus wants us to understand. God bless you.

Long Version:

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice". With these words, Jesus was defending and contrasting the actions of his disciples when they seemed to be breaking the Law of the Sabbath with the actions of the Pharisees who appeared to be pious in following all the prescribed sacrifices and offerings but whose souls were lacking in mercy, compassion and sincere love.

" I desire mercy, not sacrifice" were the words originally spoken by the Lord God through his holy Prophet Hosea in the Old Testament times, in warning the children of Israel to repent of their idolatrous and sinful lives. Their sacrificial offerings no longer had any merit and were even offensive to the Lord when their daily living demonstrated lives of idolatry, and lacking in mercy, compassion, and love of neighbor.

The teaching and clarification by Jesus of these two contrasting actions are foundational to building our house (our lives) on rock (his Holy Word), in reconciling with our God, and living out our spiritual lives during our salvation journey.

Jesus desires and is pleased with our sacrificial offerings but only when our hearts and souls are reconciled with him and our neighbor. Matthew 5:23-24 says "Therefore ifyou are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your. "

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While our obedience to God's Law of the Sabbath (Sunday for Christian Catholics) is required, our love and mercy towards our neighbor is an equal requirement of the same Law. (Love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself, is the summary of the Ten Commandments). That is the bigger picture and purpose of the Law which Jesus wants us to understand.

Conversion of our soul is an ongoing process and Jesus is always present to assist us through His Holy Spirit and Holy Mother the Church. It is mercy, expressed, practiced and demonstrated to our neighbor, that God desires much more as opposed to offering a sacrifice to God which may be lacking in love, and compassion for our neighbor. God bless you.

El Senor nos ensena esta manana que es igual de importante para nuestra salvacion, de amar a nuestro projimo y estar reconciliados de corazon con nuestro projimo y hacerlo antes de ofrecerle sacrificios y alavanzas al Senor, tan importante como con la obligacion de celebrar la Santa Misa en los Domingos.

Como dice la cancion "Dios no escucha la oracion si no estamos reconciliados". Primero hay que reconciliarnos y amarnos de corazon antes de traer ofrendas al Senor. Dios nos bendiga.