

SYNOPSIS

God continually calls us to repentance and to become more like Him. As humans we have a hunger to progress. Television ads feed off our inner desire to improve and become the “best version of ourselves”. However, Matthew Kelly writes, “so many of these programs and products divorce themselves from God and in doing so lose their connection with grace”

“No great change happens without grace”

The first step toward becoming “Perfectly Yourself” is acknowledging your imperfections. Before a big event, we take a warm shower to wash away all the dirt from our daily living. Confession or repentance is an opportunity to be washed clean and receive grace, allowing us to go forward and continue to progress to the “best version of ourselves”.

Our Heavenly father is a God of compassion. In today’s Old testament reading, the people of Nineveh heed Jonah’s warning, repent and change their hearts and behaviors. God is compassionate and does not destroy the city. God desires for all of us to be the best that we can be, and He knows that past sins prevent us from moving forward. *God loves you as you are—but He Loves you too much to let you stay that way.*

In the 2nd reading we hear that Time (Kairos) is running out. Saint Paul encourages us to focus on the Kingdom to come and live as one who is preparing for the future. Just as Jonah the prophet preached repentance and warned of God’s judgement, John the Baptist preached this same message of repentance. Then in Today’s gospel reading, Jesus warns us that the time (Kairos) is now.

“The Kingdom of God is at Hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel”

DISCUSSION

1. What area of your life do you want to see change? Have you asked God to give you the wisdom and grace to start progressing, one step at a time?
2. What do you think of the shower analogy? How do you feel when you leave confession? Why is this the first step toward spiritual progress?
3. Why is failure part of progression? A baseball player fails over 2/3 of his time at bat. What must be his mindset when he steps up to bat?
4. The bible says that God counts the hairs on your head. You are so valuable and precious to Him. He sees you and knows all the details of your marvelous body. How can you care for your body better? God can give you the self-control and help you need. Invite Him to join you in your desire to progress and become better.
5. While it is common to give something up, is there something extra you can do to follow Jesus more closely this Lent? The disciples gave up fishing, so they had more time to “fish for men”. If there someone who is sick or lonely that you could visit during this special time of lent?

REFLECTION

If you have dirt that is weighing you down, ask God to forgive you now before you receive the holy sacrament of the Eucharist. Be sure to begin Lent with taking a warm soapy shower in the graces of confession. Seek the Lord for His wisdom and grace. Ask God what He wants of you; He will give you the grace to progress. You don’t have to be perfect to please God. We all stumble, fall and fail. Failure is part of the journey. The disciples made mistakes and failed, but God still used them to help build up His kingdom. If you stumble, ask God for forgiveness and for His help to keep trying. Celebrate when you do make a good choice. Today you resisted staying in bed and came to Mass. Your “Yes” to come to mass pleases your heavenly father. What else can you say “yes” to this week and continue your progression? God loves us so much, and wants us to be happy. Can one truly be happy weighed down by the dirt and muck of sin? Jesus shed his blood so that we could be washed clean. We can never earn our way into perfect heaven, but God gave us Jesus Christ, the perfect spotless lamb of God. Why is **surrender** always the first step of our journey toward a “Better version of yourself”?

