***Homily***

***6th Sunday of Easter Cycle A***

***May 21, 2017***

**As I sat down to work on this weekend’s homily my mind was taken back to a warm Fall afternoon a couple of years ago. I had just finished a funeral. There wasn’t much participation on the part of those who attended the Mass. Following the luncheon, we gathered at the cemetery for the committal. At one point as I offered the graveside prayers I invited everyone to join me in the “Our Father.” No one did. I was shocked they didn’t know it. Only the funeral director prayed it with me.**

**Now it’s not that the people who attended the Mass and the graveside service were bad people. They weren’t. They cried sincere tears over the death of their mother and grandmother. It was clear they dearly loved her. It’s just that they appeared to be people without faith--- who didn’t believe in God or anything beyond the grave.**

**Admittedly this example is a bit extreme but the truth is we all have family members, children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, and cousins and aunts and uncles and so on who no longer come to church or practice the faith. It’s not that they are bad people, we know they are not. And we dearly love them. It is just they are products of the kind of society we have become over the last 50 to 70 years.**

**What has happened to us during that period of time has been nothing short of alarming. We have gone from being a nation founded on belief in God--- to a society that has become increasingly secular; a society that has gradually pushed God to the sidelines--- to the point where it is no longer legal or lawful to call upon him in prayer in our schools or public gatherings.**

**We have become a society where people can drop to one knee in protest during the singing of the national anthem---and that is lawful--- and defended as the exercise of free speech. But we can’t drop to two knees and pray in public before a sports event or any other kind of gathering---because it is seen as a violation of the separation of church and state and therefore is against the law.**

**In fact, just about the only place you will see the name of God in public today is on our money and the motto it bears “In God we trust.” Trust me the day is coming--- and is not far off--- when those words be removed from our money and declared unconstitutional, as will the phrase in the pledge of allegiance where we refer to our country as “One nation under God.”**

**Like I say it is shocking what has happened to us over the past 50-70 years. We have gone from being a nation founded on belief in God--- to being a nation where his name can’t be spoken in public. And the more we have distanced ourselves from God--- the more unraveled our society has become and that unraveling seems to be occurring at record pace in recent years.**

**Look at what is happening on the campuses of our colleges and universities. If students don’t like someone who has been invited to speak on campus they riot, set fires, destroy police vehicles block expressways---all because they don’t want anyone who doesn’t agree with them to have a chance to speak.**

**Then there is what is happening in Washington. You know politicians have never been known for their honesty. In the past at least they tried to cover it up---now they are just openly dishonest. Take the case of Judge Neil Gorsuch--- the Senate approved him as a Justice on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals by a vote of 96 to 4.**

**Everyone said he was a stellar Judge, a man of exceptional integrity, fair, smart and impartial. Then when the current Administration nominated him for the Supreme Court many of those who had praised and voted for him in the past--- were suddenly saying how awful he was and too far out of the mainstream to serve on the Supreme Court.**

**It wasn’t true and they knew it but they said it anyway out of allegiance to their political party. It appears that many politicians could care less about this nation and its people. All they are interested in is regaining power if they’ve lost it or hanging on to power if they have it.**

**Nothing is sacred anymore--- not even the office of the presidency. As I watched the news this past week I heard the president referred to as a punk, a jerk, a buffoon, and an idiot. I couldn’t believe anyone regardless of party affiliation would speak of any president in that way. We are headed down a very dark road and if we stay on this path it isn’t going to end well for us. Satan doesn’t just have a toe hold on our society and world today---he has a choke hold.**

**The interesting thing is in the gospels the Lord warns us about times like this. He says in John’s Gospel “You will have trouble in the world, but take heart---I have overcome the world.” His words and promise in today’s gospel are most encouraging of all. Jesus assures us “I will not leave you orphaned, I will come back to you.”**

**The full message of Easter isn’t just that Christ is risen, but that he is living among us now. He is present to us in the awful situation in which we find ourselves. The Lord is reminding us that he is The Way. He invites us to turn to him and the Father in trust--- for the strength and endurance, for the wisdom and perseverance to get through this frightening time.**

**There is a powerful verse in the First Letter of John in the NT. I would like to end my homily with it. It goes like this: “Greater and more powerful is the God who is with us and lives in us---than the devil who lives in the world.” What has made us great and good and prosperous as a nation in the past has been our faith in God. The way back to that greatness is to be found in our country’s turning back to God.**