

Deacon Tony's Christmas Homily 2019

THAT SIN MAY NOT ENSLAVE US

Isaiah is very clear: He will not be silent until Jerusalem is vindicated, that is cleared from blame. Through the covenant with Moses, the Israelites are led out of the captivity of Egypt and from the slavery of their master on earth. As the Jewish people still celebrate Passover to this day, as Jesus did at the Last Supper, to establish a new covenant so that sin may not enslave us.

The prophet continues with the example of God in a marriage covenant with humanity. Jesus told the Pharisees that a man marries a woman and the two become one flesh. We are called to be one with God. How beautiful is that?

Paul, in our second reading, calls out to his fellow Israelites and all God-fearing people. I feel the urge to call out: TO ALL MY FELLOW CATHOLICS AND GOD-FEARING PEOPLE, LISTEN UP. Paul reminds us that God hates the thought of His children ENSLAVED by sin.

When we were baptized, we were anointed with the oil of salvation.

The oils are a symbol of a protective seal. We are offered up to God with this protective seal which protects us from the devil. The devil has no authority over God's children; ONLY WHAT THEY ALLOW HIM TO HAVE. Many of us remember Flip Wilson's Geraldine, a woman of the night. We remember her saying: THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT. Well the devil can't make anyone sin because he has no authority over us.

He can only do what we allow him to do. We are free from the enslavement of sin.

In our Gospel we see the formation of the Holy Family

They got off to a very rocky start for no fault of their own.

Society at that time had strict rules concerning pregnancy before marriage. But God called them to go along with His rules and go against what society had told them. They were called to have eyes and ears for God's guidance. They followed God's calling and went against society's rules to form the most beautiful family that has been our example and the example of millions of families down through the centuries.

We too face society's wrath when we have eyes and ears to see and hear God's commands in spite of being unpopular. Let's look at a few examples of our choices.

MARRIAGE: Society tells us that if you no longer have feelings for your spouse, that you should divorce. If we listen to God, He will direct us to programs like MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER or RETROUVAILLE that are saving thousands of marriages today. They create a space for the Holy Spirit to do His job of bringing love back into the relationship and keeping families together.

FAMILIES: God guides us to stay close to each other by prayer and attending Mass and the Sacraments together. Another older TV program was the Christophers. Do you know what their slogan was?

THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER.

Sometime a mother or a father will ask me for advice on a teen that has turned away from God. Sometime prayer is the only answer. If you have been praying together as a family and you hold out your hand to pray, they will take your hand. If this is the first time you extend your hand to pray with them, it will be foreign to them and they will reject it.

RAISING CHILDREN: Education is high on our priority list just as society tells us. We should start preparing in the eighth grade if we want to go to THE college. We've seen the extreme behavior of wealthy movie stars and politicians who are buying a diploma for their children.

The family of God hears that we are to instruct our children on moral behavior and that by working for their diploma they will be better equipped to a productive job and contribute to society.

Be sure to advise them to find the Catholic Newman Center so that they can be a part of worshipping together and learning about social justice in their new neighborhood. NEWMANCONNECTION.COM

Encourage them to include Catholic books in their readings.

Point them to WORDONFIRE.ORG with Bishop Robert Barron and/or SCOTTHAHN.COM

Also discuss the fact that there are many atheist instructors that want to convert your children to the religion of atheism because they view Catholicism as a crutch. But when you are crippled it ain't half bad.

And lastly our Church and our society has polarized views on ABORTION. Society says that a fetus becomes life when it is born and until then it is a mass of tissues. Anyone who gets an ultrasound can see a living and growing human being, fully alive and developing.

God's family sees that there is life before an abortion and there is death after an abortion. With God is forgiveness and healing always.

As a member of God's family, may we always put Him first and allow the Holy Spirit to take us for a ride unto eternity.