

## **Homily for the 5th Sunday of Lent**

*Rev. Francis D. Kim*

Last couple of weeks, I went to Korea to visit my family. It was a long flight: 14 hours direct flight from New York JFK to Seoul Korea. In the plane, a man sitting beside me asked, "Are you tired of the long flight?"

I smiled and replied, "I'm little tired, but I don't mind it much. You see, I am going to my home and meet my dad and my family when I get there. So, I'm very happy."

In the long journey of life, sometimes, we get tired of the burdens of life. But, we know that we will meet Jesus at the end of our life's journey, and, eventually, we will arrive at heavenly home where all is happiness, joy, and peace, and that makes all the difference. St. Paul once said, "Therefore, we do not lose heart. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Knowing we will be with Christ forever, keep your eyes on eternity!

But, sadly, many people get their happiness only from outward circumstances. As long as their lives are untroubled, they feel happy. But, when illness strikes, a relationship breaks down, or any other unexpected troubles engulfs them, then, happiness flees.

Remember, God always wants you to be happy. This is God's plan for us. No matter what trials we face, Christ never leaves us alone. He is with us every step of the way! That's why Jesus came to the world, and suffered and died on the Cross.

To keep the promise, we have the choice: die to self or cling to a self-centered life. The choices and decisions we make now will affect and shape our future, both our future on earth as well as in our future life in heaven.

Today, Jesus encourages us to think, to think about the consequences of our choices, especially the choices and decisions that will count not just for now, but for eternity as well. Then, what kind of future are you preparing for?

We are now entering the fifth week of Lent. The 'hour' is drawing near. Next Sunday, we will hold palms and remember the entrance of

Jesus to Jerusalem. The 'hour' is really close to Jesus. So, in the liturgical readings today, God is calling us to a new life because the 'time' is at hand. At this 'time,' God will draw all people to His glory.

The first reading also reports that the 'time' is coming, so Jeremiah said, "I will make a new covenant." People had committed sin and broken their relationship with God. So, it was the time to reconcile with God. They had to renew their faith. It would be a new life. It would be a new covenant with God. At this time, they would know from their innermost minds that they were God's people, and God would be their 'only one God.'

In today's Gospel, Jesus is also talking about the new life. "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

The grain of wheat is symbolic of new life. We have to die to self in order to experience spiritual rebirth. Dying to self is necessary to receive new life.

When we were baptized, we were already called to a new life. In this new life, as Jeremiah says in the first reading, "Our sins will be forgiven and never remembered again by God." When a person is baptized, his or her old sinful nature dies. And, just as Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, through Baptism a new creation is raised from death to walk the new life.

But, we still live the old life. We still stay in the darkness. Our human nature still remains in the state of the old nature. As Jeremiah reminds us, with the new heart and the new human spirit, we will become God's people, and He will be our God. God allows us this new life. This is a New Covenant.

The 'time' is at hand. Through Christ, God invites us a holy and new life. Make a turning point in your life. Decide to change and to move your life to a holy and new life. Don't stay in the past anymore. Don't stay in the darkness anymore. The 'time' is at hand.

Then, when the 'time' comes in His resurrection of glory, we will confess ourselves, "Truly, you are the Son of God. Hosanna in the highest!"