

Homily

Bombarding us, at the moment, are dilemmas that can change the course of our society

- For example
 - We have the ongoing issue of refugees and asylum seekers and their continued incarceration
 - We have the promotion of a perception of discrimination against a religious group within our society...the Muslims
 - We have the unrelenting pressure of a society – a people that refuse to look beyond their own pleasure and welfare
- And into these situations we are confronted with the question
 - Where can we build the Kingdom of God in all of this?
 - Do we speak of judgment or do we focus on hope?

Matthew's Gospel presents us with CHOICE

- it is a choice to be part of God's kingdom or not
 - judgment is given to those who thought themselves "holy and righteous" the religious authorities of Jesus' time
 - they continued to ignore the invitation to the Kingdom of God
 - because accepting this invitation involved them changing radically
 - being focused more on the plight of people rather than the overbearing rules that they imposed
- likewise, we are presented with the choice to be part of the Kingdom of God or not
 - in our life situations – like the refugees/asylum seekers, like the presence of a multi-cultural – multi religious community, like the isolation and self-centredness – we have to choose to accept the invitation to the Kingdom of God or not

- let's look at the possible implications of our choice
 - if we accept the invitation to the Kingdom of God then...
 - we not only rail against the ongoing imprisonment of innocent people in detention centres, we also work actively to get the society to change its attitude to one that is more humanitarian and caring
 - if we do not accept this invitation
 - then we revert to the old way of thinking...it's someone else's problem or I don't really care anyway

 - if we accept the invitation to the Kingdom of God then...
 - we seek to understand those who are different from us and we refuse to let popular "fear mongering" affect the way we look at the people of Islam
 - if we do not accept this invitation
 - then we generate the suspicions against a people because of their religion and our way of thinking might also agree with the one's who spat on a Muslim lady at Macquarie Centre a few weeks back
 - if we accept the invitation to the Kingdom of God then...
 - then we view with suspicion the marketing campaigns that promote the latest gadget, the best cars, the accumulation of things to give us happiness and we try to live simply taking joy in the people around us rather than the things
 - if we do not accept this invitation
 - the Sunday papers, with all the ads for new stuff, becomes our bible, our way of life, our yearning and everything we hear about the suffering of people and their struggles will melt into the ether of our own self-centred universe

In our Gospel story, we will be judged on our choices

- if we do not accept the invitation to be part of the Kingdom of God by the way we live then this judgment will lead to condemnation

Others will be invited into the Kingdom

- now the beggars, the poor, the outcast, the unworthy are called into God's kingdom...saints and sinners alike!
 - Everyone is expected to embrace the attitudes and the behaviours of the Kingdom of God
 - welcome and acceptance of people;
 - openness to God's presence in the ordinary events of life;
 - willingness and a readiness to bring about change in ourselves and in our world

Yes, the Gospel does present us with a choice, doesn't it!

Do we have the courage to respond with acceptance?