

**Most Reverend Martin D. Holley**  
**Homily for the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr**  
**St. Patrick Cathedral, Fort Worth, Texas**  
**Saturday, January 15, 2011**

"Those Who Are Well Have No Need Of A Physician, But Those Who are Sick; I Came Not To Call The Self-Righteous, But Sinners"

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is often said that there are three types of people in society. People who make things happen, people who watch things happening, and people who ask "what happened?"

As we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are reminded that he made things happen. He learned this from the greatest teacher of all, the Rabbi, Jesus Christ, Son of God, who gives us all the example of this in the Gospels.

In his famous, "I Have A Dream" speech, Dr. King in reflecting of the story of the "Good Samaritan" said this:

"And so the first question that the priest asked, the first question that the Levite asked was, 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?'...But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question. If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?...That's the question before you tonight. Not, if I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job?...Not, if I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to all the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?...The question is not, if I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me? The question is, if I *do not* stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them? That's the question."

Dr. goes on to say, "Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be."

"We have an opportunity to make America a better nation. And I want to thank God, once more, for allowing me to be here with you."

When he finished his, "I Have A Dream", speech that night; the next day on April 4, 1969, at the age of 39, Dr. King died by a bullet from an assassin. His dream ended 42 years ago. Has ours? I was 15 years old then. Today, Dr. King would have been only 81 years old.

Today, we are challenged to continue living his dream and the only way that we can keep Dr. King's dream alive -- by living it, and following the example that he gave us.

In reality, it means living the Life of Christ, who is the WAY, the Truth, and the Life, and by facing the challenges that our modern society presents to us today and applying the Gospel values of peace and justice, by respecting the dignity of every human being.

When we look around our world today, we are still reminded that we have many challenges which face us. The biggest challenge that we continue to face is the abortion of innocent life, especially in the black community. I have said it for many years, that we African-Americans are an endangered species. Sure, there are many other challenges that we have to face in our communities, like HIV/AIDS, gun violence, alcohol and drug addiction, racism, marriage, unemployment, incarceration, lack of money for educational opportunities, and the list goes on and on and on. But before we can even face those challenges, strategically; abortion clinics are placed specifically in African American neighbors, and your tax dollars and mine are being used to kill black babies, white babies, brown babies; and all babies, who are all made in the image and likeness of God. If they are not, then we make God out to be a liar. And the Bible tells us that God said, "Let us make them in our own image." God is not a liar. He is all TRUTH. There is only ONE TRUE GOD. THE LIVING GOD. THE CREATOR GOD, who rules over life and death. Then who is the liar?

We, His creatures, have taken the most defenseless person on this earth, who is suppose to be safe in his/her mothers womb, and have decided that today, you die. Even as I speak right now, there are godless men and women, who are members of a worldwide organization, and who are making decisions as to who will live or die, and they couch this under the name, climate control.

Just like your tax money is being used to couch abortion of an innocent baby under the name "reproductive health services" which really means "abortion." The baby dies and the blood money goes to the doctor and all those who assist in this sinful and evil act.

Now that abortion as become catastrophic in the white community, as is seen in Europe, the plan is to go after the Asian countries, especially in the Philippines, and in the African countries, as well as the Latino/Hispanic countries. But if we truly believe in the Bible; in what God says to us in the Sacred Scriptures; that we are made in His image and likeness, then abortion is never the answer. Adoption is always the option.

I thank God that our Catholic Church has project Rachel to help women, and men to heal, who have gone through the experience of an abortion. The evil of abortion and all of the moral challenges that I mentioned earlier in which we face in our contemporary society has its roots in a more sinister culture, which Pope Paul VI, so prophetically identified, and spoke to us about in that magnificent Papal Encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.

That sinister and destructive mentality is reflected in the culture of death through the use of contraceptives, whereby we are seeing how the dignity of human sexuality is being presented to our youth and young adults through our judicial and educational

institutions by atheistic and irresponsible adults, as something that is recreational and experimental which is now being reflected in debate over the definition of marriage.

In the Gospel today, we hear where Jesus asked Levi, or Matthew to follow him; and he did. Jesus brings healing and peace to the tax collector, who was a sinner.

It is ironic that this gospel is chosen for today's mass, because if Jesus can call the tax collector to follow Him and if he can bring healing to Levi, He can and will bring healing to those who make laws which allow our taxes to be used for abortions. To those who cause violence or harm to themselves or others through the use of guns, alcohol, sex, drugs, and all of the other challenges that we face in our culture today, but only if we allow His grace in our lives, as did Matthew, the tax collector.

In scriptures today, we hear that, "The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart."

In reflecting on this, Pope Benedict XVI offers these words:

"It is necessary to take seriously the injunction to consider the word of God to be an indispensable 'weapon' in the spiritual struggle. This will be effective and show results if we learn to listen to it and then obey it."

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation; *Verbum Domini/The Word of the Lord*, offers these reflections in section (d), page 81, under the heading; The word of God and the lay faithful;

"The laity need to be trained to discern God's will through a familiarity with his word, read and studied in the Church under the guidance of her legitimate pastors. Wherever possible, dioceses themselves should provide an opportunity for continuing formation to lay persons charged with particular ecclesial responsibilities."

In section (e) on *The word of God, marriage and family*, he states

"Consequently, it must never be forgotten that the word of God is at the very origin of marriage....The great mystery of marriage is the source of the essential responsibility of parents towards their children. Part of authentic parenthood is to pass on and bear witness to the meaning of life in Christ....Through their fidelity and the unity of family life, spouses are the first to proclaim God's word to their children....The ecclesial community must support and assist them in fostering family prayer, attentive hearing of the word of God, and knowledge of the Bible."

In highlighting the recommendations of the Synod concerning the role of women in relation to the word of God, Pope Benedict concludes;

"The Synod paid special attention to the indispensable role played by women in the family, education, catechesis and the communication of values....They have an ability to lead people to hear God's word, to enjoy a personal relationship with God, and to show the meaning of forgiveness and of evangelical sharing....They are likewise messengers of love, models of mercy and peacemakers; they communicate warmth and humanity in a world which all too often judges people according to the ruthless criteria of exploitation and profit."

Today, as we reflect upon the Gospel where Jesus calls Matthew, the tax collector to follow Him, it is a reminder to us that Jesus calls all of us to follow Him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only one who can give us Eternal Life.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., referring to his own funeral once said, "I'd like somebody to mention that day that, Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love and serve humanity."

What lesson are we to learn from the Call of Levi, Matthew, the tax collector and sinner? We recognize that we are all sinners and that we have a need to follow Jesus. That we are all in need of God's mercy and forgiveness.

There is a reason why my Episcopal motto is, "His Mercy Endures", because I realize in a most profound way, how God has been, and is so merciful to me a sinner.

The men we are introduced to in the gospel verses today are seen by others as wicked men. He is defiled, despised, disillusioned, and he is a disappointment. In other words, Levi, Matthew, doesn't have anything to commend him to the Lord. His life is a wrecked and ruined life. Yet, as Jesus passed by, He issued a simple command to Levi, "FOLLOW ME!" It is a call for him to leave his old life behind to begin a new life of following Jesus. Why would Jesus have any use for a man like this? There is only one word that can answer that question and that is "grace". In spite of his occupation; his lifestyle; his failures; and his sin; Jesus loved Matthew (Levi) and He called him to a new life.

Jesus sets a good example for the rest of us. He was walking and looking for someone to touch to heal to save, as He went about His day.

I am grateful that Jesus loves the lost and that He calls lost sinners to come to Him without regard to who they are or what they have done. He has left the door open through that beautiful Sacrament of Penance, Reconciliation, and Confession, which is like a salve or ointment which is used to heal an open wound.

Our contemporary society is so wounded today, and it needs Jesus' words of healing, strength and peace. We need the Divine Physician, we need to be salvation, we need to be saved. We can find our salvation through, with and in the sacrament, where the priest, *In persona Christa* says,

*"God the Father of Mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins."*

*"Through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace. I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*

The Gospel, the Good News from today is that, God's plan of salvation is available to all who can see and admit their need of Jesus, Our Savior. If one is sick, then they can be made well.

In a few moments from now, our Bishop, Kevin Vann, will present Jesus, and say, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, happy are those who are called to his supper." Our humbly response will be, "Lord, I'm not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed. Like Levi; Matthew the tax collector, may we, sinners, all be healed.

*"Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. In atonement for our sins, and those of the whole world. For the sake of His sorrowful passion. Have mercy on us and on the whole world."*

"JESUS, WE TRUST IN YOU."