

Cycle B First Sunday of Lent
Sunday February 18th, 2018

Archbishop Wenski of the Archdiocese of Miami spoke this past Thursday and Friday about the tragic school shooting that took place on Ash Wednesday. He certainly offered prayers and condolences for those who died and those who are mourning. He went on to speak about the sorrow and disorder that parents are burying a child when in fact children are to bury their parents.

The Archbishop stated, “Now we will have a rush to judgement.” **“This is what we need to do,” “or we need to do this.”** Archbishop Wenski then spoke directly to the real problem that is in our culture. He pointed out that as a culture and society we have lost the understanding of the **dignity of the human person**. He explained that we are in an individualistic society. We tolerate a lot of different behaviors, including anti-social behavior. He also pointed out that we have not addressed the problem of mental health; the number of people with depression and the number of people who commit suicide. Families are at a loss of how to help loved ones when it comes to mental health. Our prosperous society must do more.

Archbishop Wenski mad a number of good points. The most important though is the dignity of the human person. What does this mean? The dignity of the human person means that, **we are created in the image and likeness of God**. When we see each person we ought to see the face God reflected in them. Obviously our culture has lost respect for the dignity of the human person.

Abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, unnecessary war, child abuse, elder abuse is all attacks on the human person. Gun violence is a result of the complete lack of respect for the dignity of the human person. This is the culture of death that Saint John Paul II talked about. Sure we can talk about gun control and video games, but that will still miss the point that our culture has lost respect for the human person.

Fortunately for us we can offer what the world cannot offer. We offer the peace of Jesus Christ. This peace is not some sentimental thing rather it is about a relationship with Jesus, allowing God to change our hearts. The Lord does not need to change. We need to change. Lent is about our hearts changing. This is the exact message of Jesus today as He came out of the desert. **“Jesus came....proclaiming the Gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.””**

Jesus is calling all of us to repent. In other words; Jesus is calling us to let Him enter our hearts and do major heart surgery. All of us need a transformation of heart. The moment we think we do not need any transformation is the exact moment when we do. The Lord is perfect, we are not. Lent highlights all of our imperfections.

The dignity of the human person is under attack in a culture of death. Our duty is to repent and believe in the gospel and help others to do the same; one heart at a time; so that we can restore a culture of life.