

# Homily

## 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT - A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
February 14-15, 2026

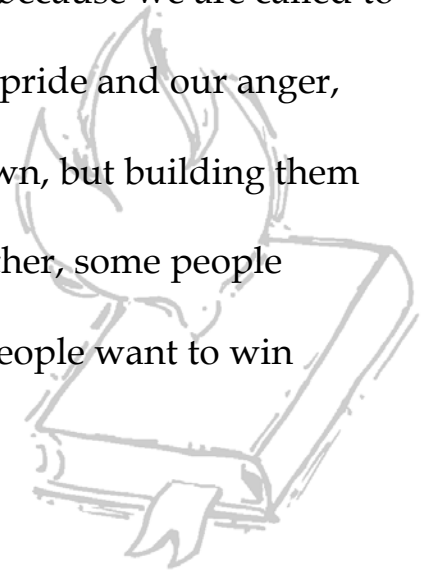
Sir 15: 15-20  
Ps 119: 1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34  
1 Cor 2: 6-10  
Mt 5: 17-37

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*The world is a dangerous place to live not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who do not do anything about it. Fr. Pete's intention in this homily is not to call all people evil, Rather, Fr. Pete is pointing out that all people are good because God created them and the Spirit who resides in them. What makes society evil is when society is conditioned by others to live evil ways.*

*In today's gospel, Jesus instructs us that in order to get to heaven, according to St. Matthew's gospel, Jesus will offer us parameters on how to do this. We must put on love, which is like the key to the door of heaven. Hate is the disposition where we choose not to enter the door, but rather would prefer to live in a condition of sin. On to the homily...*

The words from today's gospel are really "damning" in our society, and I do not like using that word at Mass, but it is true. Because we are called to be humble and are called to be loving, because we are called to be forgiving and we are called to cast away our pride and our anger, because we are called to stop tearing people down, but building them up, nevertheless, from one generation after another, some people disregard these basic teachings of life because people want to win elections and people want their way in life.



Some people will destroy anyone they want to get what they want because these same people have no consideration, neither of God, nor the other person. This is just the way our society is.

Every time we get into an election season, the televisions, the radios, the newspapers and the magazines are filled with all kind of slander, libel and hate against the opponent to whom you are opposed, instead of just letting your values speak for themselves. We learn in society that people cannot let their values speak for themselves because the other side will destroy that person and justify their evil as acceptable behavior.

This has been the way of history – only the strong survive. The way our society seems to be conditioned is that we seem to be okay going “scorched earth” because when we want our way, the other side is wrong and we are right.

In this particular country, the way the government was set up used to be based on finding “middle ground” so that people get along in the sandbox. To use a family analogy, when parents try to give two kids a piece of cake and one child is jealous of the other’s child’s slice getting

larger, the parent tries to find a middle ground, perhaps by having one kid cut the slices of cake, and the other child gets to choose which piece they want.

Somehow, some way in our secular world, we must get people to get along, but that is not in the DNA of our society, I guess. No matter what political election, no matter what government, no matter what sports team, no matter what *anything*, people want what they want, and they will destroy others to accomplish their goal. Some people will build themselves up, get the riches, get the power, get the fame, do all those kind of things, thinking that for the brief time they live on earth all of this matters. In the world of faith, though, we learn that when you die, you have to deal with the rest of our existence on the other side and the consequences that result from our actions.

I honestly believe in my heart that each of us was created to show God how much we care about each other by the way we conduct ourselves in this church and in this world. When we do not go to church, when we disregard our Lord's teachings, we are telling God that

we do not want to live in heaven by what we say and do; we show God that we do not care.

Our scripture readings today are trying to condition us on how to live like God... but many people do not want to live that way, because when you tell the truth and live in love, when you are honest about the things in life that you believe, you are going to get attacked. This is the way of the world.

In my last parish (and I can say this, because this was my last parish), every time the diocese wanted me to do something that was not easy to do, people would write petitions, people would find ways to get rid of me. People will say, "If we cannot get rid of him this way, then we will get rid of them this way." I also remember telling the diocese when they wanted me to get rid of all the checking accounts, clean up the "Protecting God's Children" program (everyone was screened with the exact same social security number) and start Hispanic Ministry, I said to the bishop's office, "I will do all of this and I will take it from the parishioners... but I will not take it from you." Behind my back, the

diocesan response was, “We don’t want to take the phone calls – let *him* take the phone calls.”

When people unjustly attack you and your reputation gets smeared in the process (the Church calls this “calumny”), we have to accept this as the way of the world – when people want what they want, they will go scorched earth on anyone to get their way. According to God, though, the path to salvation is just the opposite. God tells us, “*There is no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend*” (Jn 15: 13). “*You are my friends, if you do what I command, that you love one another.*”

From today’s gospel... “*I say to you, love your enemies, be loving to those who hate you.*” Living this way in this world is so hard, because when people are trying to destroy you, God is telling you, in return, to love them anyway (so does St. Teresa of Calcutta!). To live this way is not easy, but I also think to myself, that collectively, as a society, we do this so often to God, we go “scorched earth” on God. Yet, instead of destroying us, which God easily could do, God gives us one chance after another to come back into the fold, and then we are supposed to

celebrate when a lost soul comes back to the fold and finds their way.

This is what we're supposed to do as a parish.



For this reason, our **APPRECIATION DINNER** that we celebrate this weekend is a way for us to come together, put differences aside, and celebrate the fact that we have a Church, we have each other, and that is the way that God established us to live, pray and play together. We learn that if we like a body of Christ, then we all enter heaven together; if we disregard the community that our Lord calls us to establish as the Bride of Christ, we have lost our way.

I encourage all of you to help us build community by coming to this Mass and dinner. If we bring people together this way, if we love them and serve them, no matter who they are, then we get to the kingdom of heaven because we have done God's will. That said, as laid out in human history many generations are going to reject that way of life, because that is what people do. We have to be above that. We have to live like Christ. If we want to get to heaven, you and me both, we have to figure out a way to do it to avoid the trappings and the conditions of the world that want us to live contrary to what we just read at the scriptures.

The only two things that matter is if you love your God and if you love your neighbor, no matter who your neighbor is. So, we take this lesson that God has given us, and we ask ourselves, "How are we treating each other? How are we building each other up? Are we living like Christ, or are we living like the evil one?" Depending on how we answer that in our hearts (*and God knows what's in our hearts*), we move to the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th, with our masses at St. Anne's at 8:00 a.m. and St. Pat's at 9:15 a.m., 5:30

p.m. in English, 7:00 p.m. in Spanish. We also will have at St. Anne's a Communion Service with the distribution of ashes at 5:00 p.m. on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

If we come forward to God, humbly living a life of love, we are going to lose in this world; people will try to destroy us. When that seed dies, though, it produces much fruit. For that reason, we come here together. May God bless you for sticking with us. God bless you for supporting us, for understanding what we are trying to do, to bring that grace to you in a true, humble, sincere fashion, so you and I can do the same for the people that we meet. This is our prayer.