

# The Gospel Changes the World

Homily by Reverend Robert Gillelan

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For 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has been changing the world and changing lives. Consider that for 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has been upsetting worldly philosophies and ideologies and proposing instead the one true holy Catholic and apostolic faith.

And for centuries, the Catholic Church has opposed a society and creation of chaos and anarchy, and instead has proposed law and order as an expression of the divine plan for society and creation. And speaking of law and order, yesterday I came back from jogging on the rail trail, and as I was entering through the chapel door on Cumberland Street, three little boys came up to me, maybe the ages of 6 to 10 years of age, and the oldest one said to me, "Hey, mister, are you running from the police?" And I said, "No, I'm running because I'm jogging." And then the littlest one said, "Are you sure you're not running from the police?"

And so I showed them my key and I told them I was the pastor of this church, and that seemed to settle everything. So that's the good news that we have the neighborhood watch group. They're on duty, so I suggest maybe you don't run to your cars.

The Catholic Church, in the past century, has opposed the economic and political platforms of socialism and communism and has promoted instead the dignity of the human person with inalienable rights given to us by a creator and not by the state.

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And the Catholic Church, for 2,000 years, has upset subjectivism and relativism in all of its forms and has promoted human freedom guided by the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus Christ. And all of that began with Jesus and the apostles.

And as we hear in our first reading today and in the Gospel, this is why the apostles went back to that room after our Lord's Ascension to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who was going to come to them and empower them to fulfill that commissioning of Jesus Christ, go out to all the world, and proclaim the good news, because that good news is going to change the world and change lives. And that's why Jesus we hear the Gospel today, that Jesus prayed for his disciples.

That's actually called the high priestly prayer of Jesus, and it happened at the Last Supper. Jesus knew the seriousness of the undertaking that he was handing over to his disciples. And I think in a very special way, we see how the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ changed the world when we read through the Acts of the Apostles. And in the Catholic Church, we've been doing that after Easter, and it's a beautiful Bible study on how Saint Paul and his preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ began to change the world order.

(And by the way, I just found out at the Mass at Fatima that Dr. Scott Hahn is doing the same thing. He's on the Hallow App, so if you get Hallow, you might want to check out Dr. Scott Hahn.)

But just consider how the preaching of Saint Paul and his companions changed the world.

And for Paul, we're talking about in his missionary journeys to Turkey, Greece, and Rome, and his preaching changed the religious order of things. Because when Paul started preaching Christ crucified, it very much upset many of the

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Jewish groups, and they tried to expel Paul from their midst. They threatened him. They stoned him almost to death.

They put him in prison because he was preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. So Paul's beginning to change the world order relative to religion.

He also changed the moral order of things. And he changed that because when Gentiles or pagans became Christians, they were commanded to start eating kosher and giving up incestuous and illegitimate marriages so that they would not scandalize the Jewish Christians.

And for the Jewish Christians, they too had to accept the new moral order. No moralism going to be the *lex talionis* or an eye for an eye.

It was going to be, now that you're a follower of Christ, you need to learn to love your enemies and pray for your persecutors. Paul is changing the moral order.

And then there's the social order. Paul's preaching changed that too.

He started to break down barriers because it was Paul who said there's no more Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, but everyone is invited to fellowship around the table.

Paul also began to change the economic order of things.

He expelled a demon from a slave girl, and this slave girl was able to tell fortunes, and so her master, who's making a lot of money, called her for fortune telling. But Paul exercised that demon, and now she was spiritually free, but she wasn't bringing in the money that she had accrued because she wasn't able to tell fortunes, and that slave owner had Paul beat and thrown into prison.

Also, when Paul told the silversmiths and their union that they need to stop making silver idols because that's idolatry. And Paul started a riot when he did

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that. Kind of reminds me of when some of you who are old enough remember, I think it was 1997, when Oprah Winfrey made a comment about eating beef and all the Texas cattlemen sued her.

So Paul was also affecting the economic order by his preaching of Jesus Christ. And finally, we know that he met his end by going up against the political order because he preached Jesus Christ as Lord, and that was a threat to Caesar, and it also disturbed the Roman peace, and Paul was eventually beheaded.

So in all of these ways, we see how the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ changed the world and changed lives. And that's what the Gospel and its preaching is supposed to do for us.

It is supposed to transform our lives by these kinds of values. And it's really important to get this right, that the Gospel is supposed to inform our political, economic, social, and moral views, not the other way around.

Our political, economic, social, and moral views are not to form our faith. It's our faith that becomes our grounding and our foundation.

And that was the secret sauce: Jesus and the preaching of his Gospel that changed the world and changed lives. And we too, as baptized Catholics, are commissioned to do the same, to go out to all the world and proclaim that good news.

So may we not keep that secret to ourselves. May we be bold in our proclamation of the faith to God as greater honor and glory.