

Vespers: Wednesday of the 1st Week of Lent

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was once asked, “What is wrong with the Church today?”

How would we answer that question? What is wrong with the Church today?

We can fill the air with “if only this” and “if only that” ... and as we near a period of *sede vacante* when the cardinals of the Church will gather to pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and elect our future Pope ... how would you answer that question:

“What is wrong with the Church today?”

In the short pericope from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, we hear him say:

“Work with anxious concern to achieve your salvation.”

What is stopping us from being Jesus in the world? What are our anxieties in “*working out our own salvation*” as this verse is often rendered? What stands in the way of our holiness ... our whole-ness ... our union with God ... our being able to receive God’s infinite love ... God’s infinite mercy?

St. Paul goes on to remind us that: *“It is God who, in his good will toward you, begets in you any measure of desire or achievement.”*

In other words, any attraction we have for God comes from God. And any movement we make toward God is God’s own doing ... not our own.

And in the final lines of today’s reading, St. Paul admonishes:

“In everything you do, act without grumbling or arguing; prove yourselves innocent and straightforward, children of God without reproach.”

A reporter asked, “Mother Teresa, what is wrong with the Church today?” And like a pistol shot she retorted: “You and me!” ... You ... and ... me ...

What is standing in the way of my holiness? I am.

Who is keeping you from union with God’s infinite love and mercy? You are.

When we realize the basic truth that it is God’s good will toward us that brings about any desire or achievement in our growth in whole-ness ... in holiness ... in mercy ... in love ... when we realize that no external thing ... no other person ... can keep God away from me ... can keep God away from you ... then we can begin to get out of God’s way ... and let God be God in our lives. And only then will we begin to see the transformation of our broken world ... into the Kingdom of God ... on earth.

As we continue our prayer, let us pray that you and I can “be the change we want to see in the world” ... that you and I can “be the change we want to see in the Church” ... that you and I can “be the change we want to see in our neighborhoods ... in our homes ... in our families ... in ourselves.” We can ... with God’s help.

With God’s grace ... poured out in Jesus Christ ... and through the power of the Holy Spirit ... we ... will ... be ... that ... change.