

## 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 6/7, 2018 – Reflection

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In recent months, the mainstream news has brought into the public forum subjects that, in an earlier time, would only have been whispered about in the sanctum of the locker room or the counsellor's office or the confessional box; subjects that could be buried deep in the recesses of private memory or family secret.

I suppose it is good that, at last, some of the veil of shame and secrecy is being lifted and light is being shed on behaviors that were long kept hidden and in darkness.

How do people treat one another? How do people think about one another? How do people talk about one another? How do people behave around each other: in school; in family; in the workplace; on athletic fields; at parties; in the Church? How do people react to difference: difference in gender; difference in age; difference in physical size; difference in power and influence; difference in race or creed or nationality?

The ancient *Greeks* had a word to describe those things and attitudes that should never be paraded upon the stage, things and attitudes that should remain unspoken, things that were unworthy for public consumption and should never be thought let alone practiced. They called those things "obscena", things to be kept behind the curtain ... which is where we get our word "obscene or obscenity".

The more and more we hear from the Church abuse scandal to the "Me Too" movement among women to child trafficking to a "boys will be boys" attitude in business and sports to "Black Lives Matter" to uncivilized discourse in the political arena to damning whole groups because of race or national origin, it's clear that too many of us hold attitudes toward one another that are dismissive, disrespectful, and divisive; behave in ways and speak in terms that diminish the value of the other and objectify fellow human beings to serve my desires and needs. That obscenity, that pornography is exactly what served as the foundation for slavery, the Holocaust, pogroms, ethnic cleansing, the sex trade, the porn industry, euthanasia, and abortion.

In contrast, God looked upon all that He had created in the beginning and found it to be very good. The first man looked upon the first woman and exclaimed, "This one, at last, is bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh." The Lord God spoke to His Chosen People on Mt. Sinai: "You are not to wrong or oppress an alien in your midst, because you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt." Jesus warned us to love and protect children, "for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these!" And, Jesus also told us "that whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers or sisters, that you do unto me."

Whether in speech, in thought, or in action, when we treat others as being anything less than the beloved children of God that they are, we kill their spirit and we kill the spirit of God in ourselves, and the highest court in heaven and on the earth where the Lord God Himself is presiding judge will ask us as He asked Cain who was covered with his brother Abel's blood, "What have you done? What have you done?!!"