

Homily for the 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Not so long ago, esteemed professor, philosopher, and Catholic convert Dr. Peter Kreeft stated, “Grey is the devil’s favorite color.” In other words, the evil one delights in sewing seeds of confusion about what’s really right based on the ability to rationalize away the sinful quality of what’s wrong. This first happened in the Garden of Eden – as we hear in the Book of Genesis – when the serpent asked Eve: “Did God *really* say, ‘You shall not eat from *any* of the trees in the garden’? ... God knows well that when you eat of [the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil] your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods... [so] the woman saw that the tree was good for food – IT’S TASTY– and pleasing to the eyes – IT’S SPARKLY – , and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom – IT’LL MAKE ME SMART. So she took some of its fruit and ate it... and Adam ate it [too].”

Now, God warned Adam and Eve that the only thing they may not do is eat from this one tree. It was perfectly clear – black and white. So, when the silver serpent comes slithering along, he seeks to blur the colors a bit – Did God really say? Look how tasty and shiny, and how smart the fruit will make you! The reason Satan had to do this was because if he showed forth the full darkness of evil that lurked behind this sin of disobedience – and all the negative consequences that would follow – it would have scared Adam and Eve right back to God – safe and sound. And that’s definitely not what the devil wanted to happen! So, by offering Adam and Eve shades of gray to pick from, they didn’t have to choose between black and white anymore – they could choose their favorite gray – a blend of black and white.

As probably many of you are aware, the movie based on the book, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, was released this weekend for Valentine's Day. And although it’s billed as a romance – having to do with love – “the movie is actually about a sick, dangerous relationship filled with physical and emotional abuse”. And just like the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, this movie is billed as tasty, glamorous, sparkly, and smart. And just like the devil did at the beginning of human history, so he continues to do.

Because this immoral movie brings into focus one of the greatest demonic attacks in our world today – that on love – I’m picking on it. What is love? Is it – as one 7-year old was quoted as saying on the Today Show – coffee? Is it chocolate or flowers? Is it feeling sympathy for another? Is it laying down one’s life for one’s friends by crucifixion on the cross? What is love?

The shades of gray answer says, “it can be whatever you want it to be”. But that’s a lie, because God definitely tells us what love is when He reveals that “God is love.” Which definition will we choose? Or do we have to? Can’t we blend the black and the white? Does it matter? Yes. Absolutely. Would Jesus have died on the cross to save us from our sins – sin which began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve chose gray instead of God – if it didn’t matter?

My brothers and sisters, when it comes to God’s commandments there is only black and white. In other words, sin is sin is sin. Yes, there are varying degrees that we can know something is sinful or chose to do that sinful thing. But the truth remains that there is moral absolute truth. And the truth is that we cannot be children of God and children of the world at the same time. We must choose whole-heartedly God or not God. In fact, as St. Paul says in our second reading today: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” There is no other way. In the end, there is no gray. God bless you.