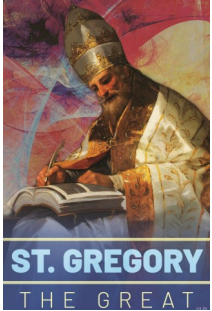


FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Have you ever heard this saying? “A memory is a photograph taken by the heart to make a special moment last forever.” Now that summer vacations are over and only memories remain, I hope everyone had a moment to remember. As we enter this Labor Day weekend, we remember all those who work in difficult and dangerous places. We also remember all those who could not enjoy any vacation because of the nature of their work and service. Thank you! To all who will start school this week, go with the Lord!

This week, on Tuesday, we will celebrate the Memorial of St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church. I have always found the Second Reading from the Office of Readings for this day very consoling. I find it to be even more so as my installation as Pastor approaches. Without further ado, here is an excerpt from ‘A sermon of St. Gregory the Great.’

“‘Son of man, I have appointed you as watchman to the house of Israel.’ Note that Ezekiel, whom the Lord sent to preach his word, is described as a watchman. Now a watchman always takes up his position on the heights so that he can see from a distance whatever approaches. Likewise, whoever is appointed watchman to a people should live a life on the heights so that he can help them by taking a wide survey.

These words are hard to utter, for when I speak it is myself that I am reproaching. I do not preach as I should nor does my life follow the principles I preach so inadequately.

I do not deny that I am guilty, for I see my torpor and my negligence. Perhaps my very recognition of failure will win me pardon from a sympathetic judge. When I lived in a monastic community, I was able to keep my tongue from idle topics and to devote my mind almost continually to the discipline of prayer. Since taking on my shoulders the burden of pastoral care, I have been unable to keep steadily recollected because my mind is distracted by many responsibilities.

I am forced to consider questions affecting churches and monasteries and often I must judge the lives and actions of individuals; at one moment I am forced to take part in certain civil affairs, next I must worry over the incursions of barbarians and fear the wolves who menace the flock entrusted to my care; now I must accept political responsibility in order to give support to those who preserve the rule of law; now I must bear patiently the villainies of brigands, and then I must confront them, yet in all charity.

My mind is sundered and torn to pieces by the many and serious things I have to think about. When I try to concentrate and gather all my intellectual resources for preaching, how can I do justice to the sacred ministry of the word? I am often compelled by the nature of my position to associate with men of the world and sometimes I relax the discipline of my speech. If I preserved the rigorously inflexible mode of utterance that my conscience dictates, I know that the weaker sort of men would recoil from me and that I could never attract them to the goal I desire for them. So, I must frequently listen patiently to their aimless chatter. Because I am weak myself, I am drawn gradually into idle talk and I find myself saying the kind of thing that I didn’t even care to listen to before. I enjoy lying back where I once was loath to stumble.

Who am I - what kind of watchman am I? I do not stand on the pinnacle of achievement; I languish rather in the depths of my weakness. And yet the creator and redeemer of mankind can give me, unworthy though I be, the grace to see life whole and power to speak effectively of it. It is for love of him that I do not spare myself in preaching him.”

Peace,