

8/4/2019 at St Luke's, Hollister

Pentecost 8C

Garlic Festival Shooting: 7/28/19 (Last Sunday)

6-year-old Stephen Luciano Romero of San Jose

13-year-old Keyla Salazar of San Jose

25 year old Trevor Irby of Romulus, NY (pop. 4,000 btwn Cayuga and Seneca Lakes in Central NY)

12 more injured

El Paso, Texas Shooting: 8/3/19 (Yesterday)

20 killed, 26 injured

Dayton, Ohio Shooting: 8/4/19 (Early this morning)

9 killed, 26 injured

2019 mass shootings as of 6 am today - 251

Our national conversations about climate change, nuclear weapons, immigration reform, gun control, abortion, and the rights of minorities has degenerated into rhetoric that spews out division, anger, hate, and violence.

I attended a Rally on Friday at 7 pm at the 400 Block– about 100 people came to pray, to show solidarity with Gilroy, and to hear from Supervisors Delacruz and Hernandez, and Councilman Resendiz. A very articulate lady from Niner Empire (who sponsored the rally) shared that the shooter in Gilroy said he was doing this because he was ‘angry’. She challenged us to think about what could create such violent anger. She thought of the kids she has taught over the last 18 years; how disconnected some feel... She is concerned over seeing smart phones replace friendships. She said this feeling of being disconnected isn’t just about kids, but adults, too. She asked us to think about all the little things we can do – should do - every day to show other people that we care about them – by what we say and what we do to help them. Bringing a meal to a neighbor who is fighting an illness; invite children to join your children or grandchildren for a play date. There are lots of little ways to make a huge difference. What a great homily!

Today’s Hebrew Scripture – Ecclesiastes – was written by King Solomon; the wisest man who ever lived. This book describes his thoughts in his old age about all that he had experienced and accomplished. But if that was how he was to put value on his time on earth, it only seemed to be “Vanity of vanities”. Knowledge, wisdom, wealth, power, servants, and recognition all pass on to the next

generation. Like the parable in the Gospel lesson, what value is there in just building bigger barns?

I have led a couple of courses designed by John Ortberg. One of his courses left for us to explore is titled; “When the game is over, it all goes back in the box.” That was Solomon’s observation. But Solomon didn’t get stuck there. If you go to the end of his book, he gives this counsel: “Here is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person.”

Solomon was sharing how important it is for every single person to choose an ideal to live by. I have mentioned before to you the deep transformational experience I felt from making a Cursillo. The major theme of that weekend retreat is to realize how fundamentally important it is to have an ideal that inspires and motivates us; gives our life purpose and meaning; shapes our personality; raises us to a higher level of humanity. Just as Solomon discovered, the conclusion presented in Cursillo is that the ideal we were created for is to make Jesus the pattern for our own life.

Our culture, technology, the pace of our lives, the pressure of the cost of living, and mostly the lack of people choosing a God-centered ideal to live by; all contribute to the horrific events that we are experiencing. I really believe that we Christians are being called to remind people about the life lessons we know about from Solomon and Jesus: to choose our ideal, and not let the world impose one upon us.

Amen.