

## 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today we have heard the words of the Apostle Paul, "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ...Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:18-21).

History shows, that before the birth of Jesus Christ, mankind was in great moral decline. People were wise to find a way out of this shameful state. Ancient Greek philosophers invented various theories of human happiness and taught them publicly in the streets and squares. The Jewish jurists and scribes saw the happiness of their people in the coming of the Messiah, who would free the Jews from Roman slavery and subjugate the whole world to them.

Then, a strange miracle happened. All who sought salvation from the moral decay of society and sought true happiness, turned away from the Greek sages and Jewish teachers and turned their full attention to the Cross of the Lord, united their lives with it and found happiness in it. Over time, these people, who were saved by the Lord's Cross, became happier, and the Greek philosophers and Jewish teachers remained ashamed. "Where is the Gentile sage now, where is the Jewish scribe," said the Apostle Paul. Didn't God turn human wisdom into nonsense?

The Apostle Paul also points out the reason why God has shamed human wisdom. The reason is that people did not know God in His wisdom by their wisdom. God's wisdom is poured out in nature, in all creations, and in His words. People have humiliated the image of God. They "...exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles" (Rom. 1:23).

The result of the worship of the creature, instead of the Creator, was the immoral life of mankind.

I bring to your attention an instructive story. This story beautifully describes our daily lives.

Why do we lack time?

Once Lucifer convened a world congress of demons. In his introductory speech, he said, "We cannot forbid Christians to go to church. We cannot forbid them to read the Bible. We cannot forbid them to commune with Christ."

As soon as they establish a connection with Christ, we lose control of them. So, let them go to their churches, but we will steal their time from them, so that they, being constantly anxious, will not be able to pray and repent of their sins and develop their relationship with Christ. "That is what you must do," said the devil. "You must prevent them from entering into communion with God and maintain that connection throughout the day."

"How do we do that?" Cried the demons.

"Distract them with nonsense and come up with many ways to occupy their minds with a bunch of things at once. And most importantly, give them the desire for material goods and enrichment.

Let them be filled with the desire to earn as much money as possible and buy cars, homes, and cottages. Let them earn more and more money to spend in restaurants and cafes, buy fashionable expensive clothes, make expensive repairs in homes, and furnish them with expensive fashionable furniture.

Tempt them to spend cash and borrow, take out long-term loans, and thus fall into the bondage of banks. And when they are ignited by the desire for personal enrichment, they will no longer need Christ.

Encourage their wives to stay at work and their husband to work 6-7 days a week so that they do not have time to take care of their families and raise their children. Do not let them spend time with children, let them wander from morning till night on the street and hang out with bad company, then they will stop studying and nothing good will come of them. Then their families will fall apart, and they will be alone, and we will help them sleep with grief.

Excessively stimulate their attention so that the TVs and computers in their homes work constantly and they spend as much time as possible near the screens, then they will not have time to pray.

Make sure you have non-Christian music in every store and restaurant. This will block their minds and destroy their connection with the Supreme.

Spread as many magazines and newspapers, as possible, everywhere. Bomb their minds with news and advertising 24 hours a day. Let the sea of billboards catch their eye. Fill their inboxes with catalogs for ordering goods by mail, newsletters, and offers of free services and false expectations. Show in magazines, and on television, slimming beautiful models, so that men believe that this appearance is the most attractive beauty, and, most importantly, become dissatisfied with their wives.

Make sure their wives are too tired to love their husbands at night. If they don't give their husbands what they need, men will start looking elsewhere. It will quickly destroy their families!

At Christmas and Easter, distract them with holiday bustle, TV concerts, and drunken feasts so they don't teach their children the true meaning of Christmas and Easter.

Let them even come back from vacation tired! Make sure they don't have time to enjoy nature and admire God's creation. Instead, take them to amusement parks, sporting events, games, concerts, and movies.

And let all Christians be busy, always busy! Pack their lives with so many good deeds that they don't have time to look for strength in Jesus.

Soon they will live and work, relying only on themselves, sacrificing their own health and families for their own affairs and money. It will work! That's a great plan."

The demons happily set out to do the task, forcing Christians everywhere to be more and more concerned and to hurry back and forth, leaving less and less time for God, prayer, and their families.

Today, they sow fear ...

Fr. Serhii Deiak