

## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year A July 31, 2011 – Fr. Gerald Haemmerle

I recently saw the film *Midnight in Paris*, an interesting and clever film written by Woody Allen. It is a story about a young man named Gil, who writes movie scripts, is in Paris with his fiancé and her parents. He really wants to write a great novel, which he has been working on. In his novel the leading character owns a nostalgia store, one that sells memorabilia. He himself would have loved to have lived in Paris in the 1920's, when such writers as Hemingway and Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein and others lived. One evening when he was walking the streets of Paris, the church bells ring, and a car from the 20's passes by, stops and picks him up and takes him to a party where he meets all of these remarkable writers from the past. He meets them every evening and befriends them. He falls in love with a beautiful woman from that period who longs for the 1890's. For her those were the golden years, just as the 20's were the golden years for him. And he begins to be aware that you have to learn to live in the present, as difficult as it sometimes is, and that there is no such thing as the golden years.

When I think of the present, it doesn't seem so great right now. We have two political parties who can't agree on anything and are about ready to cause our country to go bankrupt. We have a church that seems so divided at times. I especially see a division among the clergy. Even in sports, things are not well. For a while it looked like we might not have an NFL season, we might not have an NBA season, and who knows what is happening at OSU. And every older generation worries about the younger generation, what is the world coming to.

I rarely speak about all three of the readings, but today they are all so beautiful and speak to our troubled world. Our first reading was from Isaiah, written to the people at the end of the Babylonian captivity. God is assuring the people that he has not forgotten them. He said, "All you who are thirsty, come to the water. You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life." Each Sunday God invites us to come to the banquet, where He will feed us for the journey.

Our second reading is from Paul's letter to the Romans, and he asked "what will separate us from the love of Christ?" He lists many things, like anguish and distress and peril. We could add some of our worries and concerns for this present time. But then he said "I am convinced that neither death nor life nor anything will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Finally, our gospel, a familiar one. Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, his cousin and mentor. He wanted to be alone, perhaps to grieve, to pray for guidance and courage. But the crowds came to him, his heart was moved with pity so he cured them. As evening approached, he was aware that the crowd was hungry, and he worked the wonderful miracle of multiplying the loaves and the fish. They all ate and were satisfied.

Each Sunday we come to Mass, we bring our worries and problems, we are hungry and thirsty. And our Lord offers us his comforting words, and challenges, and he feeds us with the bread of life, his very body and blood.

We do sometimes long for the past, and see it as the golden age. We worry about the future, but only God knows what it holds. We have only the present. With God's ever present help, may we live it well.