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**Homily Preparation Notes - Mark 12:38-44**

-Intent of the past two weeks to begin preaching on the Creed but last time had to deal with the election so this time desire to kill two birds with one stone: some catechesis on creation and then I our One Lord Jesus Christ, as the Creed calls him

regarding creation, I thought we could address the problem of evil, with perhaps the greatest dilemma people face, when they consider the attributes of God as the creator: all knowing, all powerful, all loving, all good, etc. if he is all of this, how is that we have evil in the world?

how is it in our Gospels that the scribes can actually take advantage of widows financially? This is a moral evil, what people choose with their wills then there is what the catechism calls physical evil, which is the bad stuff that happens to us, such as suffering sickness and natural disasters.

*CCC* on Providence and the scandal of evil.

**309** If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance.

*There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.*

**310** But why did God not create a world so perfect that no evil could exist in it? With infinite power God could always create something better.

But with infinite wisdom and goodness God freely willed to create a world "in a state of journeying" towards its ultimate perfection. In God's plan this process of becoming involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and destructive forces of nature. With physical good there exists also physical evil as long as creation has not reached perfection.

**311** Angels and men, as intelligent and free creatures, have to journey toward their ultimate destinies by their free choice and preferential love. They can therefore go astray. Indeed, they have sinned. Thus has moral evil, incommensurably more harmful than physical evil, entered the world. God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil.

He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it:

For almighty God. . . , because he is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his works if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself.

**312** In time we can discover that God in his almighty providence can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by his creatures: "It was not you", said Joseph to his brothers, "who sent me here, but

God. . . You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive." From the greatest moral evil ever committed - the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all men - God, by his grace that "abounded all the more", brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption. But for all that, evil never becomes a good.

313 "We know that in everything God works for good for those who love him." The constant witness of the saints confirms this truth:

St. Catherine of Siena said to "those who are scandalized and rebel against what happens to them": "Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind."

St. Thomas More, shortly before his martyrdom, consoled his daughter: "Nothing can come but that that God wills. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be, seem it never so bad in sight, it shall indeed be the best."

Dame Julian of Norwich: "Here I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly keep me in the faith. . . and that at the same time I should take my stand on and earnestly believe in what our Lord shewed in this time - that 'all manner [of] thing shall be well.'"

314 We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of his providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God "face to face", will we fully know the ways by which - even through the dramas of evil and sin - God has guided his creation to that definitive sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.

-in the midst of a fallen world, where sometimes it seems evil abounds, we proclaim in the Creed *I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of the God*

*one Lord? Yes, one Lord. There is no other like him. There is no other to whom all of our fealty and devotion are due. There is no other person in history, nor will there ever be, who claims the title Lord as does Jesus Christ.*

-in our Gospel today, we see a widow loving God, giving to Him the very little that she had. Her act attracts the attention of Jesus Christ from across the square. He actually calls his disciples to him, so that they can all look over at her, and learn the lesson of gift-love that she is teaching.

-have you ever dropped a small coin or a piece of jewelry in thick carpeting, and you let your eyes pore over a small area, again and again, until something shiny catches your eye. You have found it, the treasure you lost.

-the eyes of Jesus Christ, Lord of love, is looking always over the surface of the earth for the shine, the radiance of gift-love. It is very important to him, and he want it to be very important to his disciples.

-St. Bede: *The poor widow is the simplicity of the church: poor indeed, because she has cast away the spirit of pride and of the desires of worldly things; and a widow, because Jesus her husband has suffered death for her. She casts to mites into the treasury, because she brings the love of God*

and of her neighbor. The Church sends her whole loving into God's treasury, because she understands that even her very living is of divine grace.

-if he truly is your Lord, as you say every Sunday in the Creed, then you must focus your whole life on the task of self-emptying-love

-here in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Lord of Love comes both to give you the power for the gift, and to receive it.