

## **Sodom and Gomorrah: Compare to Detroit**

**Reaction of God: Waiting to see if anyone really cares about what is going to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah**

**The cities are headed towards destruction because of the life people are living.**

**God is willing to intervene if SOMEONE wants him to.**

**Key Question: Do the people of Sodom and Gomorrah want to be saved?**

**Enter Abraham, a just man, a man with a concern for the cities.**

**Abraham begins one of the most celebrated dialogues with God in the Old Testament.**

**Not once in the Book of Genesis does Abraham ever ask God for anything for himself:**

**When God asked Abraham to take his wife his flocks and his nephew and leave his father for a new land, he did question God.**

**When God told Abraham that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore, even though Abraham was an old man and had no children, he did not question God.**

**And later, when God asked him to sacrifice his one son, Isaac, his only beloved son, he did not question God.**

**NEVER, even when it meant even giving up having a family, did Abraham question God, never, that is, until the first reading today from the Book of Genesis.**

**Abraham over and over again Abraham pleads for the that the lives of the just men and women who live in the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah be spared.**

**Again and again he asks for justice for all the just of the cities.**

**What if there were only 50 or 45 or 40 or 30 or 20 or 10 just people in the city, would God destroy it? God relents because Abraham is asking, not for himself, but for others.**

**Detroit brings us shame whether we are a resident or live in the metro area. Our city is a sign of failure due to many sins: racism, political corruption, division of rich from the poor... the result of a self-centered what's-in-it-for-me society.**

**But what about our moral fiber?**

**Whether we live in the city or in the metro area, are we willing to talk to God about Detroit like Abraham did with Sodom and Gomorrah?**

**Are we willing to search for justice for other people, especially the poor? Should not we, the people of God, be the first to express this concern?**

**(pause)**

**When we look at the life of Jesus, do we find that Jesus confined his preaching and healing to people inside holy buildings, in the temple area or the synagogues of his day? No, his main place for preaching and healing was in the streets with the people. He kept moving from one town to another. Yet, while Jesus ministry was out in the midst of the world seeking justice and forgiveness, I can guarantee you that few preachers or priests are comfortable preaching in our streets or bringing healing to our neighborhoods.**

**Yet one preacher today who is VERY comfortable with this kind of ministry. Pope Francis, who is presently visiting Brazil, is VERY comfortable with the poor and outcast. In the midst of some of the poorest, most violent and gang-riddled barrios of Rio De Janeiro he is very much at home. He is very comfortable among the poor; he is familiar with their wants and needs; his witness encourages us to follow Christ and bring justice to all in our world, especially those in extreme poverty.**

**(PAUSE)**

**We at Corpus Christi are in a privileged position. We are located IN the city. We are in the midst of many in need. We can offer our facilities and expertise and presence to witness to the needs of our neighbors in the name of Christ. The SAYA Summer Camp which we co-sponsor for children in our neighborhood and has just finished its 10<sup>th</sup> summer program is a powerful witness to justice and care for our children. And our leadership role working the work with O'Hair Park Community Association assisting with its park clean up and block club development efforts tell people that, like Abraham, we have a deep concern and compassion for God's people.**

**Yet we can never forget that our neighbor's needs (and our own as well) are not simply physical and social. As Pope Francis has said, the most important work which he will perform at the World Youth Days in Brazil this week will be hearing confessions: that is, reconciling people to God. He will be doing what Abraham was doing in our first reading: calling forth the mercy of God on those who want to live just lives.**

**(PAUSE)**

**In today's gospel, Jesus begins his prayer to the Father with the words: THY KINGDOM COME! The Kingdom of God Jesus is speaking about is a kingdom of compassion, of justice and of peace. In spite of all appearances, God has not been walking away from Detroit...we have. Just as in the days of Abraham, God waits for our dialogue with Him. Yes, God waits. Will we be advocates of God's mercy and justice for those in our midst? Yes, in the midst of our Sodom and Gomorrah, God waits. May our response be a sign of faith bringing hope and salvation to a people God is madly in love with.**