

Atheism, Practically and Theoretically Speaking Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time
Saturday, July 21, 2018 8:15 AM **Mi 2:1-5; Mt 12:14-21** (St. Lawrence of
Brindisi, priest and Doctor of the Church) (We have to find God in the transcendent, which is
also immanent, but which is not physical or material or in our face.)

“And in his name the Gentiles will hope”

Today’s two readings are in a very interesting juxtaposition. The first reading is from the prophet Micah. **Micah** is complaining about the immorality, the injustice, the disgraceful behavior of people, basically **the chosen people**. He is saying that they **are forfeiting their relationship with God because their relationship with God is all about righteousness, and they have pushed that right out of their whole conscience.**

Now one of the things he says is that people who are evil are basically the equivalent of atheists. This does not mean that atheists are evil; that’s a different thing. His point is this: that when people act as if there is no justice in the world or ever will be, or as if there is no moral force at work in human life, they are all for all intents and purposes atheistic, that is, theism is a personal relationship with God who is just, God who is good, God who is truthful, God who is beautiful. So **if we reject the transcendental qualities of justice, beauty, truth, and so on, then we are rejecting the source of them as well, practically speaking. So practically speaking, atheism is a matter of living all for oneself and ignoring anything else.**

Now theoretically it’s a little different. **Theoretically atheism is a matter of being materialistic, looking for some proof.** Well you can’t find proof of God within the material order, because **God is not material.** And the whole idea of looking for proof itself is a sort of missing the point when **the very nature of God is transcendent.**

So **when Jesus comes** he is the one chosen by God, but he speaks in such a way that **“nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break.”** What is this about? It’s about not being right in front of everyone’s face. **God is not in front of everyone’s face, and nor is God’s Messiah.** If we want to find God, **we have to find God in the transcendent, which is also immanent, but which is not physical or material or in our face.** We can pretend it’s not there, and that’s precisely what the depraved do.

“And in his name the Gentiles will hope.” Here the gentiles are those people who are desirous of God.