

Homily Ideas for Sunday September 3, 2006

The Twenty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

Day before Labor Day

From the reading from Deuteronomy: ...Observe them [the Lord's decrees] carefully, for thus you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence....

From the Psalm: ...He who walks blamelessly and does justice....

From the reading from James:Act on this word. If all you do is listen to it, you are deceiving yourselves....

From the gospel of Mark: ...nothing that enters a man from outside can make him impure; that which comes out of him, and only that, constitutes impurity....

- ❖ In a sense these readings are readings particularly for the laity, most appropriately on this day be our Labor Day holiday. These readings are to me an answer to the statements and question, "I have to work and make a living. I don't have time to spent hours in prayer and days in retreats. How can I live the life of a holy person, a saint?"
- ❖ These reading tell us it is about action, about what we do, about how we live. "Observe the Lord's decrees;" "Act on this word;" "that which comes out of a man, only and that, constitutes impurity."
- ❖ The gospel raises an interesting question for me. What parallels are there in my life that are like the washing of hands and food for the Pharisees? What is it that I take in ritually with the expectation that taking it in makes me holy?
- ❖ The thought that startled me was that it was attending Mass, listening to these reading, participating in the Eucharist. These are all inputs to my life, to my spiritual being, to my soul.
- ❖ But these readings today, tell me that taking these things in does not give evidence of my holiness. Rather it is what comes out of me. "If all you do is listen to it, you are deceiving yourselves." My spirituality, my holiness, is expressed by what I do after Mass, after prayer, after reflection.
- ❖ I don't take that thought to mean I must quit my job and work in the missions or for the church. I take it to mean that in my work and in my play I must act with those in my life, near and far, with dignity, respect, and love.

- ❖ As the psalmist in today's psalm said, I must walk blamelessly and do justice; I must think and speak truth; I must not harm those in my life; I must not attack my neighbor; I must keep my word even if it causes me a loss; I must be fair in all my financial dealings.
- ❖ As Mother Theresa noted in her writings, Christ is in our daily lives. He comes to us in disguise. One frequent disguise is that of the poor. She also noted that people can be poor in many ways other than lack of money. They can be poor in love, respect, dignity, friendship, companionship, trust, ethics, as well as economic justice.
- ❖ With deep regret, I remember back in my high schools days when my classmates and I effectively made one of our classmates an outcast, labeling and calling him a brown-nose. Here was Christ in disguise, deeply needing acceptance and companionship and we rejected him. Take a moment and think, who in your workplace or home do you make fun of, isolate, or treat with little or no respect? If you saw him or her as Christ in disguise, how would it change your actions?
- ❖ When you leave here today, look for Christ in your life, look for him in his disguises. You will find him at your workplace, in your home, even on the golf course or tennis courts. When you find him, treat him well. Each time you find him, he is inviting you to make his world, our world, a better place. Acting on invitation and his words to love one another is living our faith, is holiness in our lives.

(Submitted by Louis Trenta)