

Homily Ideas for the Sunday before Labor Day, 2005

From the reading from Ezekiel, “Speak out to dissuade the wicked man from his way.” Ez. 33: 8

From the reading from Romans, “Love never wrongs the neighbor, hence love is the fulfillment of the law.” Rom 13:10

From the reading from Matthew: In dealing with wrongs against oneself use a progressive response—first between yourself and the person wronging you; next involve several witnesses; finally involve the community. If this is not effective, do not associate with the person.

- ❖ These readings speak to our whole life, not just our Sunday life or our church life. On this weekend of Labor Day, they offer guidance on living our faith, our beliefs, in the work place.
- ❖ From the second reading, we are reminded to act with others in a loving manner, that is, not to wrong those we encounter in our work places. Likewise, we should expect not to be wronged.
- ❖ If we are wronged, the first reading and the gospel tell us that we should speak out to the one wronging us, “Speak out to dissuade the wicked man from his way.”
- ❖ But the gospel goes further and tells us to deal with those wronging us in a progressive way—first one-on-one; then, if necessary, with one or two witnesses or supporters; and finally, if these efforts fail, by engaging the work place community in the effort to correct the wrong.
- ❖ Yet, in light of the words of the second reading, this should be done in a manner—with words, non-verbal expressions, and attitudes—that would show we care for them as if they were our own flesh and blood, as if they were ourselves. How would we like to be approached if we were hurting the feelings

of others or damaging their efforts to successfully complete the work expected of them?

❖ Some suggestions in this effort

- Start in a spirit of inquiry; seek to understand what the others meant and intended. Begin with the presumption that the others might not have meant or intended what you perceived. Listen to their explanations, understand them.
- Share the meaning and interpretation you gave to their actions.
- Acknowledge and take responsibility for whatever you may have done to contribute to the problem between you and them.
- Ask how this could be resolved. Listen. And then make your own suggestions. Seek to satisfy their needs as well as your own.
- If a mutually acceptable resolution cannot be worked out, the gospel suggests that you seek to have as little to do with them as possible thereafter.

❖ One final note, we also need to be open to the possibility that we are the one acting wrongly, that we are the one who is acting in a way that is not based on love of our neighbor in the person of our co-worker or customers. Let us decide now how we will react if we are approached by one, or two, or three.

❖ What is the loving way to respond to our work day colleagues?

Submitted by Louis Trenta