

Homily Ideas for Sunday May 1, 2005

The Sixth Sunday after Easter

Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

From the reading from the Acts: “Without exception, the crowds that heard Philip and saw the miracles he performed attended closely to what he had to say.”

From the reading from 1 Peter: “Keep your conscience clear....If it should be God’s will that you suffer, it is better to do so for good deeds than for evil ones.”

From the reading from St. John: “He who obeys the commandments he has from me is the man who loves me...”

- ❖ Today, May 1st, is celebrated in the Church as the sixth Sunday after Easter and as the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. So, let’s look at today’s readings for ideas for us, a people who work. By work I mean all the productive activities we undertaken whether or not we are paid in money—typing, cleaning house, framing a house, changing diapers, administering a contract, comforting a child, repairing broken plumbing, representing a client, etc.
- ❖ The above words from the Acts of the Apostles about Philip and the crowds make the point that it was not the words alone that got the crowds to attend to what he had to say. Philip’s actions were part of his telling of the good news.
- ❖ It reminds me of a saying attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, “Preach the gospel always; if necessary use words.”
- ❖ For us, I think the meaning is that we are part of the preaching of the Gospel of Christ by the choices we make and the behaviors we exhibit as we go about our daily work. The words of Christ written in the gospels need our lives to express them in the workplaces of the world. The words are lifeless until activated through our lives.

- ❖ St. Peter advises us to keep our consciences clear and that it is better to suffer, if suffer we must, for good deeds rather than evil ones. A few paragraphs after giving this advice in his epistle, St. Peter elaborates in words that have a message for us workers. He tells us to remain calm, pray, love each other constantly, and put our gifts at the service of each other.
- ❖ So it seems that the good deeds and clear conscience are to be found in working for and with each other, interacting with our fellow workers and clients in ways that express love for them as fellow human beings—we do good for them—and do it with a sense of calmness.
- ❖ I must confess I wondered how prayer fit into this, thinking at first my prayers at work would likely all be prayers asking for help. While this is good, and part of what I think God wants of me, I did not feel satisfied with that.
- ❖ Then it dawned on me that my prayer need not always be words. My work, doing my tasks as well as I could, is prayer. I praise God and give glory to him by using my gifts, my talents, by supporting my co-workers through my good work, and by interacting with those around me as people I care about, people I love.
- ❖ So I still pray a lot for help doing my various jobs and interacting with those I work with. Now I also choose to make the work I perform and the way I perform it part of my prayers of glory and praise.
- ❖ Jesus told us in John's gospel that the person who loves him is the one who keeps his commandments. Recalling that Jesus also told us that the two great commandments are Love God and Love One Another, we must consider how to express that love. Today, on the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, it is appropriate for us to reflect on how we keep those great commandments in our daily work lives. How does my life preach the Gospel of Jesus in my workplace?

Submitted by Louis Trenta