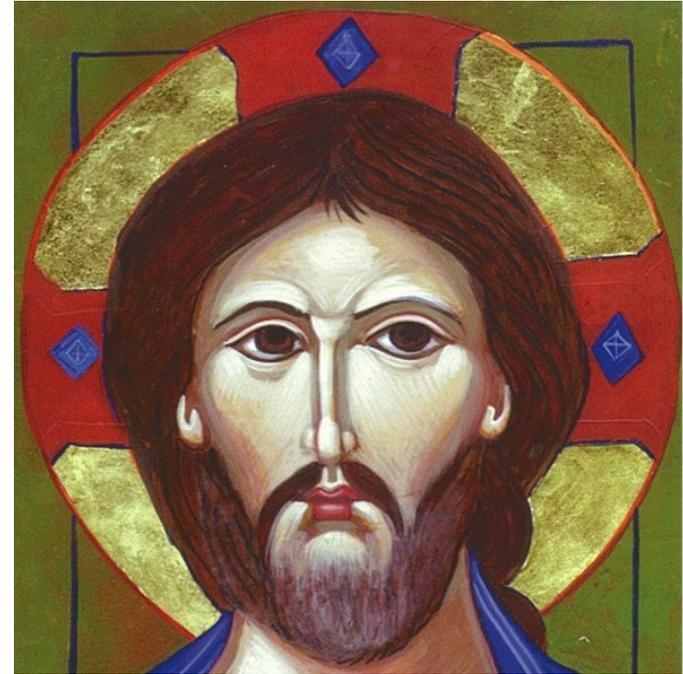


Link to Liturgy



More than Words 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lessons and Discussions

Page 4 – To Obey is to do Your Will

“Which of the two did his father’s will?”

Page 9 – The Kingdom of God

“tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you”

Page 12 – More than Words

“He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went”

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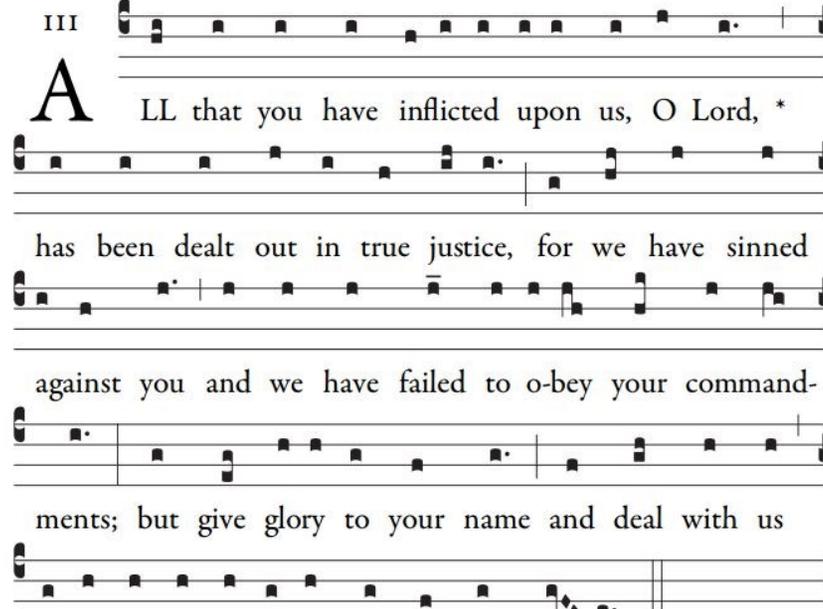
Entrance Antiphon (Dn. 3:31,29,30,43,42) – Simple English Propers

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.

Omnia quæ fecisti

Dan 3: 31, 29, 30, 43, 42

III



ALL that you have inflicted upon us, O Lord, *

has been dealt out in true justice, for we have sinned

against you and we have failed to o-bey your command-

ments; but give glory to your name and deal with us

according to the abundance of your mer-cy.

Source: <http://www.ccwatershed.org/>

Alternate options:

Hymns

At the Name of Jesus
 Creator of the Stars of Night
 Crown Him with Many Crowns
 O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Songs of Praise

All in All (Dennis Jernigan)
 Holiness / Take my Life
 Freedom Reigns

Remnant

Alive in You (Remnant)
 Big Gulp (Remnant)

“The End” Notes

- [1] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy Packet
- [2] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol.5
- [3] Fr. Leonard Goffine; *The Church’s Year Part I*; page 72
- [4] Liturgy of Hours; Office of Readings; September 16
- [5] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *The Three Ages of the Interior*
- [6] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 120
- [7] The Penny Catechism
- [8] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 120
- [9] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol.5
- [10] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol.5
- [11] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 120
- [12] Catechism of the Catholic Church; 546
- [13] Pope Benedict XVI; *Jesus of Nazareth* page 49
- [14] Pope Benedict XVI; *Jesus of Nazareth* page 50
- [15] Pope Benedict XVI; *Jesus of Nazareth* page 49
- [16] Gospel in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [17] Pope Benedict XVI; *Jesus of Nazareth* page 50
- [18] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol.5
- [19] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 477
- [20] *Patrologia Graeca* 11, page 495
- [21] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. *Basic Catholic Catechism Course*; page 19
- [22] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 236
- [23] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 120
- [24] The Order of the Mass
- [25] Saint Thomas Aquinas
- [26] Link to Liturgy Lesson - Not simply repeating his name
- [27] Link to Liturgy Lesson - Not simply repeating his name
- [28] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 120
- [29] The Order of the Mass
- [30] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 282

Totus Tuus (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
be- stow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us
and make those hastening to attain your promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. A-men.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Matthew 21:28-32 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: “What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did his father’s will?” They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

From Saint Catherine of Siena

Oh! How sweet and glorious is this virtue of obedience, which contains all the other virtues! Because it is born of charity, and on it the rock of holy faith is founded, it is a queen, and he who espouses it knows no evil, but only peace and rest. The tempestuous waves of evil cannot hurt him because he sails in Your holy will, O my God.... He has no wish which cannot be satisfied because obedience makes him desire You alone, O Lord, who know his desires and can and will fulfill them. Obedience navigates without fatigue, and without danger comes into the port of salvation. O Jesus, I see that obedience conforms itself to You; I see it going with You into the little boat of the holy Cross. Grant me, then, O Lord, this holy obedience anointed with true humility. It is straightforward and without deceit; it brings with it the light of divine grace. Give me this hidden pearl trampled underfoot by the world, which humbles itself to submit to creatures for love of You.”

Responsory – Office of Readings – 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

May your love grow ever deeper in knowledge and all discernment

- so that, perceiving always what is best, you may act blamelessly and with a clear conscience.

I am sure that the one who began this good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- so that, perceiving always what is best, you may act blamelessly and with a clear conscience.

To Obey is to do Your Will – Lesson and Discussion

“Which of the two did his father’s will?”

“Oh! How sweet and glorious is this virtue of obedience, which contains all the other virtues! Because it is born of charity, and on it the rock of holy faith is founded, it is a queen, and he who espouses it knows no evil, but only peace and rest.”^[1]

Obedience comes from charity, which Jesus most perfectly shows us. “...he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:8) When asked about the mystery of the Incarnation and how it is that God could become man, one Saint simply responded, “Love, does such things.” Many times people are able to be obedient and do what would

our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee to we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, Who by the working of the Holy Spirit didst prepare both body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother, Mary, that she might deserve to be made a worthy dwelling for Thy Son, grant that we who rejoice in her memory, may, by her loving intercession, be delivered from present evils and from lasting death, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

tes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advo-cá-ta
 nostra, illos tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ó-cu-los ad nos co-
 vér-te. Et Je-sum, be-ne-díctum fructum ventris tu- i,
 no-bis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde. O cle-mens:
 O pi-a: O dulcis Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Ut digni efficamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus. Omnipotens sempiternus Deus, qui gloriosae Virginis Matris Mariae corpus et animam, ut dignum Filii tui habitaculum effici mereretur, Spiritu Sancto cooperante, praeparasti, da, ut cuius commemoratione laetamur; eius pia intercessione, ab instantibus malis et a morte perpetua liberemur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Slave Regina (English Translation)

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and

seem impossible. To those who act out of charity, the obedience is not a burden but rather freedom. Obedience to God, Church, parents, teachers and other authorities feels like slavery if there is no charity, with charity however we are free to obey and do so with joy.

“Christ obeyed out of love. This is the Christian meaning of obedience: that which we owe to God, that which we give to the Church, that which we give to our parents and those in authority over us. God does not want to be served by slaves or by robots. God wants to be served by his sons and daughters. He desires a willing and cheerful obedience that come straight from the heart.”[2] If God were to force us to obey, the obedience would not be out of love. We see in the life of Our Lady and the Saints a choice to obey out of charity. They are not forced to obey but rather choose to obey.

Why should we obey the Church? Why should we obey our parents? “We must be obedient to the Church, because Christ Himself with His holy Spirit lives in her and governs her, and has said: Who hears not the Church, let him be to thee a heathen and a publican, therefore, shut out from eternal life. We must be obedient to our parents, because they are placed over us by God, and we are indebted to them, under Him, for life and many benefits. Those children who do not assist their parents when they are old, poor, and helpless, or are ashamed from them, have reason to be afraid, since even Christ Jesus, the God-Man, was obedient and subject in all things to His mother, and to a humble mechanic who was only His foster-father.”[3] Jesus was obedient to His Father’s will, to Mary and Joseph and to the civil authorities. “He went down with them [Mary and Joseph] and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.” (Luke 2:51) By imitating Christ in obedience to authority we are living out the fourth commandment to, “honor thy father and mother.” (Exodus 20:12)

How does obedience unite? The Church is called “Holy Mother Church.” Obedience to Holy Mother Church not only increases our charity but also unites us with other brothers and sisters, who call the Church “Mother.” This common obedience rooted in charity, allows us to unite and rejoice in our brothers and sisters. “After all, we have the same Church, the same mind, the same unbroken harmony. Why then should a priest not take pride in the praise given to a fellow priest as though it were

given to him? What brotherhood fails to rejoice in the happiness of its brothers wherever they are?”[4] On a sports team one player should not be envious of another player when that player succeeds. Both players have the same goal, obedience to the coach. A common obedience implies a common goal and the desire for that goal to be accomplished. It does not matter who on the team accomplishes the goal as long as it is accomplished. In the same way, a soldier should not be envious of another soldier for following the commands of the general. Obedience should unite and help each individual reach the common goal.

Do we ever have the right to disobey? Yes. It would be wonderful if the will of God and our parents and authority always were one, but the fact is, that they are not. We are to obey anyone in authority at all times except for one condition. If the authority asks us to do something that is contrary to the will of God, we have a right and obligation to disobey.

How does pride get in the way of obedience? “Pride inclines us to do our own will and to seek what exalts us, not to wish to be directed by others, but to direct them. Obedience is opposed to this pride. The only Son of the Father came down from Heaven to save us, to cure our pride, becoming obedient unto death, and even to the death of the cross.”[5] Pride is the opposite of the beatitude, blessed are those who are poor in spirit. It is also opposite of the virtue of humility. Many times the obstacle to being obedient is the thought that we know better or can do it better. We become attached to our own ideas, attitudes and way of doing things. The more we become set in our way, the less we can become set in God’s way. “One of the greatest obstacles to full conformity of our will to God’s is our attachment to our own desires and inclinations.”[6] **How could we ever know better or do better than God?** Being poor in spirit helps us to realize that we are in need of God and that we cannot know or do better than God and so we place our will at His service thus imitating Christ. “We are to follow our Blessed Lord by walking in his footsteps and imitating his virtues, which are meekness, humility and obedience.”[7]

How do we know the will of God? We need to know clearly the teaching of Christ and the teachings of the Church He founded. “The will of God is expressed in His commandments, in the precepts of the Church, in the duties of our state in life; beyond all that, there is still a vast area of our free choice, where it is not always easy to know with certitude exactly what God wants

V

S Alve Re-gí-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ, Vi-ta, du-
 cé-do, et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamá-mus, éx-su-
 les, fí-li- i Hevæ. Ad te suspi-rá-mus, geméntes et fler-

Jesus is the Sacrifice – to be offered.
 Jesus is the Peace – to be given.
 Jesus is the Bread of Life – to be eaten.
 Jesus is the Hungry – to be fed.
 Jesus is the Thirsty – to be satiated.
 Jesus is the Naked – to be clothed.
 Jesus is the Homeless – to be taken in.
 Jesus is the Sick – to be healed.
 Jesus is the Lonely – to be loved.
 Jesus is the Unwanted – to be wanted.
 Jesus is the Leper – to wash his wounds.
 Jesus is the Beggar – to give him a smile.
 Jesus is the Drunkard – to listen to him.
 Jesus is the Retarded – to protect him.
 Jesus is the Little One – to embrace him.
 Jesus is the Blind – to lead him.
 Jesus is the Dumb – to speak for him.
 Jesus is the Crippled – to walk with him.
 Jesus is the Drug Addict – to befriend him.
 Jesus is the Prostitute – to remove from danger and befriend.
 Jesus is the Prisoner – to be visited.
 Jesus is the Old – to be served.

To me –
 Jesus is my God.
 Jesus is my Spouse.
 Jesus is my Life.
 Jesus is my only Love.
 Jesus is my All in All.
 Jesus is my Everything.

Jesus, I love with my whole heart, with my whole being. I have given Him all, even my sins, and He has espoused me to Himself in tenderness and love. Now and for life I am the spouse of my Crucified Spouse. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina

of us.”[8] We must pray and seek advice from a spiritual director to discern God’s will and it is equally important to not get wrapped up in the influences of the world. “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2) We have the gift of free will and obedience is how we will use that free will. **Who or what will we obey? What motivates our obedience to someone or something?** We can be motivated by fear, as is the case of peer pressure. We can be motivated by pleasure, as is the case in many temptations. The greatest motivation to be obedience and to use our free will for God, thus uniting our will with His, is love. “Love is essential to Christian obedience. Christ obeyed the Will of the Father not because he had to, but rather, because he wanted to. Love is what makes our obedience fully free. For the person who wants to follow Christ, the law is never a burden.”[9]

TV - Medal of Honor: Dakota Meyer - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:24

<http://youtu.be/AAaDdtRGgz0>

Dakota Meyer risked his life going into the heat of battle five times to rescue fellow Marines and Afghan compatriots. What motivated him? When Dakota was asked what was it in his training that made him be able to do this, he reposed that it was a mixture of training and morals. Love was essential to Dakota’s obedience. He did not act this way because he was told, but because it was the right thing to do and his brother’s life was on the line.

How does obedience led to freedom? “Obedience springs from freedom, while at the same time leading us to greater freedom. When a person obeys with all his heart, he is actually conserving his freedom by choosing the good. This truth is somewhat analogous to the situation of a person going on a trip. Without a doubt, he does not feel restricted by the markings on the highway. Similarly, a mountain climber does not feel constrained by the rope that ties him to his companions. There are many such examples which can be taken from ordinary life.”[10]

Saint John Paul II stated in a homily, “freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.” If we are enslaved to sin then we are not free to do what is right, because we are constantly choosing what is wrong. Obedience

leads to freedom since following God's will frees us from sin and enables us to do what we know is right.

What are some examples of how obedience to things, brings freedom? A great example given by the Catholic priest and musician, Fr. Stan Fortuna is the obedience of a drummer. A drummer must be obedient to the beat the rhythm and keep the beat. It is within the obedience of keeping the beat that the drummer has freedom to create fills. This is also true of sports. A team will have set plays for defense and offense, they stick to the obedience of the formation or pattern and it is within that obedience that each play performs at their best. Our rule (formation, pattern, playbook) is the Gospel. We become frustrated and lose freedom when obedience is not practiced, just as we can become frustrated with our sports team does not stick to the play or a drummer does not keep the beat. If we do not live the Gospel, we will not only become frustrated but will be disobedient and enslaved by sin.

What is the benefit of being obedient to God's will? "This is the great value of obedience; to unite man's life with the will of God; to give man in every circumstance, the opportunity to govern himself, not according to his weak, fragile will, which is so subject to error, blindness, and human limitations, but according to the will of God. This divine will has such goodness, perfection, and holiness that it can never be mistaken nor will what is evil; it aims only at good – not the transitory good, which today is and tomorrow is not – but the eternal, imperishable good." [11] We can look at a person who does his or her own will and then look at a person that does the will of God. The person, who does their own will, struggles to do the good and many times wants to do the right thing but fails. They may say things such as, "I am only human" and not have a clear vision in life. Fear, failure, self-interest and a lack of self-control surround us when we our focus only on our will. When we look at the Saints we see clarity of vision and mission. The Saint will say, "I am human, but with God's Grace, I am divine." The Saint is able to live without fear. They have power, charity and self-control, living out the words of Saint Paul in regards to the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the gift of strength we have been given the Grace to obey God's will and thus transform our life uniting it with the life of Christ. As Saint Paul says we must "stir into flame this gift." "I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition

Mother Teresa composed while hospitalized in Rome in 1983.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

"Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15)

You are God.
You are God from God.
You are Begotten, not made.
You are One in Substance with the Father.
You are the Son of the Living God.
You are the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

You are One with the Father.
You are in the Father from the beginning:
All things were made by You and the Father.
You are the Beloved Son in Whom the Father is well pleased.
You are the Son of Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary.

You were born in Bethlehem.
You were wrapped in swaddling clothes by Mary and put in the manger full of straw.
You were kept warm by the breath of the donkey
That carried You mother with You in her womb.
You are the Son of Joseph,
The Carpenter, as know by the people of Nazareth.
You are an ordinary man without much learning,
As judged by the learned people of Israel.

Who is Jesus to me?

Jesus is the Word made Flesh.
Jesus is the Bread of Life.
Jesus is the Victim offered for our sins on the Cross.
Jesus is the Sacrifice offered at the Holy Mass for the sins of the world and mine.
Jesus is the Word – to be spoken.
Jesus is the Truth – to be told.
Jesus is the Way – to be walked.
Jesus is the Light – to be lit.
Jesus is the Life – to be lived.
Jesus is the Love – to be loved.
Jesus is the Joy – to be shared.

Integrity is “honesty or trustworthiness. The quality of being virtuous. Wholeness of character without duplicity or internal conflict of interests. It comes from the Latin *integrare*, to make whole; to present something in its entirety.”[30] As Christians we are called to present our life in its entirety to God, our thoughts, words and actions. These three should match; we should think well, speak well and do well. The challenge of every human is to have a wholeness of character. We value those who “keep their word,” or who “speak their mind.” These phrases do not just apply to the Christian but to all. As Catholics, the Church has identified in our Catechisms throughout history four basic human needs. These are the four pillars of the Catechism and we are expected to not just do well in one area, neglecting the rest. Neither can we choose one and leave out another. We are called to be people of integrity to make the four parts whole and present them in entirety to God.

The four pillars of the Catechism are the profession of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, Life in Christ and Christian prayer. These four pillars match with who we are as humans. We believe. We pray and we live and participate in the liturgy and sacraments. It is not enough to just profess, to believe. It is not enough just to pray and celebrate. We must live, putting into action our belief, prayers, liturgy and sacraments. We should live what we believe and we should believe what we pray.

Prayer is communication with God. If we are speaking and listening to God, we need to believe what we are saying and what we are hearing. If our relationship with God however ends with the conversation, then we are like the second son who speaks but then does not act. We should therefore enter the conversation with God, believe in the words exchanged in the conversation and then live out the conversation in our life.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Jesus is My Everything

This prayer is taken from a novena to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. Mother Teresa’s spiritual director, Jesuit Father Celeste Van Exem, said of her. “The meaning of her whole life was a person: Jesus.” Indeed, for Mother Teresa, Jesus was everything. When asked by a reporter, “Mother, what place do you give to Jesus in your life?” She immediately replied, “I give Him all the place.” This total belonging to Jesus is evident in the following meditation

of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

The Kingdom of God – Lesson and Discussion

“tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you”

“Jesus invitation to enter the kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough; deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to ‘know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.’ For those who stay ‘outside,’ everything remains enigmatic.”[12]

ACTIVITY – The Kingdom of God

Read the following verses: Matthew 13:44-45 – Buried Treasure and Pearl of Great Price; Matthew 13:3-9 – Sower and the Seed; Matthew 25:14-30 – The Talents. **What do these Gospels and today’s Gospel say about the Kingdom of God? What does God expect of those in His kingdom?** First we remember that God calls all, everyone is welcome. Just because all are welcome does not mean that God lowers His standard or that God does not have expectations for those He calls. It is clear from the parables above and the Catechism that those called to the kingdom are expected to:

1. Be open (be good soil).
2. Give everything (sell all to purchase the treasure).
3. We follow not just with our words but also with our actions.
4. Be useful and productive.

We are first to be open to God’s Grace. We then give everything to God saying, “I am totally yours.” However, simply saying those words is not enough, they must be lived out through our actions. Our lives are to be useful and productive. We see in the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard that Our Lord will not tolerate idleness. Actions and usefulness are based on the “Work of God,” this work includes physical work, spiritual work and prayer, which Saint Benedict calls the work of God.

What is the Kingdom of God? Pope Benedict XVI in His book *Jesus of Nazareth* identifies the kingdom in three ways. “Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person; it is he...he is God’s presence”[13] The Kingdom of God is also associated with the Church, the Church as the “actual presence of the Kingdom within history.”[14] The Kingdom of God is then Jesus himself, made presence within history by the Church. There is a third part of the Kingdom of God and that is its location.

Where is the Kingdom located? “There is a second way of looking at the significance of the ‘Kingdom of God,’ which we could call the idealistic or mystical interpretation. It sees man’s interiority as the essential location of the Kingdom of God.”[15] Jesus says to the chief priests and elders in the Gospel, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.”[16] On the outside the chief priests and elders would appear to be living out God’s Kingdom, but the Kingdom of God is not located in the exterior but the interior. It is the tax collector and prostitute that heard Saint John the Baptist’s message of repentance and invited Jesus into their interior life. Jesus invites us and then we invite Him into the interior of our life. Saint John the Baptist said, “Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.” (Matthew 3:8)

What is the evidence of our repentance? The evidence of our repentance is Jesus living within our hearts; this is what was evident in the life of the tax collectors and prostitutes who repented. “The ‘Kingdom of God’ is not to be found on any map. It is located in man’s inner being. It grows and radiates outward from that inner space.”[17]

Who does each son symbolize? “John the Baptist had shown the way of salvation, yet the Scribes and Pharisees, the people who were supposedly dedicated to God’s service, did not take the Precursor seriously. They are symbolized by the son who said, I go, sir, but did not go to the vineyard. As far as anyone could tell, these officials were very rigorous in their observance of the Law. Yet when the moment of truth arrived, that being the testimony of John the Baptist, these religious leaders showed their true colors. They were not docile to the divine Will and the fulfillment of the Law. On the other hand, a great number of tax

through faith, which is acted out in charity (good works). Grace is primary, as it is only by God’s grace that we are capable of attaining salvation. We accept this grace through faith. Faith, which includes the Liturgy, Sacraments, prayers, teachings, and much more, is the dispenser of grace. This grace, accepted through faith, is acted out and must be acted out in charity (good works). For Jesus tells us that to whom much is given, much is expected, and that we must love others as He has loved us. He has loved us by giving us grace and faith. One of our obligations then, is to give the grace and faith we have received to others. We do this through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.”[26]

What helps us unite our will to the Will of God? “St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote that the true joy that leads all of us to heaven is following the will of God here on earth, and by this ‘obedience to the divine will, and not simply repeating his name’, we can obtain everlasting life.”[27] It is obedience. Our free will can be used for good or evil, when we use it for good; we use it for God and thus unite our will with His. Saint John of the Cross says that obedience and submission is much harder than good works. “Obedience makes us surrender our own will to adhere to God will as expressed in the orders of our superiors; and the perfection of charity, as well as the essence of union with God, consists precisely in the complete conformity of our will with the divine will.”[28]

MUSIC - Extreme - More Than Words - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:17

<http://youtu.be/UrliLvg58SY>

The chorus says, “More than words is all you have to do to make it real, then you wouldn’t have to say, that you love me, yeah, cause I’s already know.” Through his actions the first son gave his father more than words. In fact his words said “no” but his action “yes”. As Christians are desire is to give our self completely to God. We want our thoughts, words and actions to conform completely to God. This is why in the Confiteor at the Mass we confess when we have not conformed our thoughts, words and deeds according to the will of God. “I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do...”[29] In the parable of the two sons the words and deeds of the sons are not integrated. One is correct in his words but incorrect in his deeds, while the other is incorrect in his words but correct in his deeds.

road to heaven through, with and in Jesus Christ who is the road to heaven. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6) Three, we can remember that our thoughts, words and actions are easily influenced by what we see and hear. **Are the things we see and hear pleasing to Jesus?**

How are our actions effected or influenced by the conversation we have, by what we say and what we do?

Words are powerful and once spoken are expected to be put into action. We might make a promise to someone or even dare someone to do something, each of these begin with words and usually end with action. **How many times do we get a lyric stuck in our head that is contrary to the message of Christ and His Church? How many times do we continue to picture in our mind a scene from a movie, TV or Internet that continues to play over and over in our mind? How often are we influenced by what our friends and peers say or do?**

MOVIE - A Christmas Story - Tongue Stuck to Pole - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 2:15

http://youtu.be/_RgCbT8eEU

In this movie we see how words led to action. This is the natural course of things, when we say we are going to do something, action should follow. In this scene the words of the dare, are followed by action. Sticking our tongue to a pole is not serious, but there are many serious sins that are acted upon because of the influence of others or the things we expose our self too. We are not only judged by what we do, but also by what we allow our self to be influenced by.

What are the bad influences in your life? How have they caused you to sin?

What are the good influences in your life? How have they helped you to avoid sin and live a life of virtue?

Why can't we just believe, just profess with our words that Jesus is Lord? "There is a heresy (false teaching) called 'faith alone' or 'sola fide.' It is a basic principle of the Protestant Reformation. It declares that humanity is justified only by a confident trust in God through the saving merits of Jesus Christ. This confident trust called fides fiducialis (trustful faith) is present in those who are predestined to be saved. It is, therefore, a work of predestination and excludes the possibility of good works that, on Catholic premises, are also necessary for salvation. Ephesians 2:8-10 says it all; we are saved by grace,

collectors and sinners responded to the Baptist's call for repentance. They are represented by the son who at first said I will not, but in the event went to work in the vineyard. He obeyed, and thereby pleased his father enormously."[18]

Who are the tax collectors and prostitutes today? Who are the Scribes and Pharisees? We are we these people! Saint John the Baptist showed the way of salvation. Many times in our life we are showed the way of salvation. Many times we have a powerful experience in life, maybe at a retreat or events in our life. We come away from the experience saying to God, "Yes, sir, I will go." But then we do not go, we do not accept the way of salvation we are given. This can also be the case in regards to the Sacraments. Each Sacrament is "a sensible sign, instituted by Jesus Christ, by which invisible grace and inward sanctification are communicated to the soul."[19] Many times we can prepare to receive a Sacrament and during the preparation and rite we say, "Yes, sir, I will go." But after receiving the Sacrament we do not go to Work in the Vineyard, we go somewhere else and are never seen again. On the other hand many times we are at a retreat and seem to get nothing from it. We might also be in a Sacramental preparation class and seem to get nothing from it. We might walk away saying, "No, God I will not go," but then we actually go away and live for God. We cannot judge our self or others by words or even an emotional response but rather judge based on the actions of our life.

What must we do if we want God to reign in us? The Kingdom has come in Jesus Christ and is made manifest to the world through the Church. The Kingdom (person of Jesus) comes into our heart by invitation only and all are invited. Only those with repentant hearts, who have welcomed Jesus into their interior life can truly pray, "Thy Kingdom come." Origen says, "For in every holy man it is God who reigns [exercises dominion, is the Kingdom of God]...So if we want God to reign in us [his Kingdom to be in us], then sin must not be allowed in any way to reign in our mortal body (Rom. 6:12)...Then let God stroll at leisure in us as in a spiritual paradise (Gen 3:8) and rule in us alone with his Christ"[20] In the life of the elders and chief priest it was not God that reigned but rather those individuals that reigned or sin that reigned. In the life of the tax collectors and prostitutes we witness conversion. A life in which sin once reigned; sin has been kicked off the throne of the individuals' heart and in its place God reigns. Those who once said "no" have done God's

will, while those who say “yes” on the exterior have remained closed and said “no” to God’s will reigning in their interior.

More than Words – Lesson and Discussion

“He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went”

We know that words are powerful. When we say we are going to do something, we are expected to be a “person of our word.” We also have heard the phrase, “actions speak louder than words.” As powerful as words are, action must follow and action most of the time speaks louder than words. Word and action go together and many times actions are effected and influenced by words either spoken or heard. Jesus is the Word made flesh. The mystery of the Incarnation is an example of the unity between word and action. Jesus is the Word of God and that Word made flesh, the Word in action. How many people did not recognize Jesus in His teachings and parables, but did recognize Him in His actions? Like the centurion who at the Cross said, “Truly this is the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54) many recognized who Christ truly was in His acts of love. In the person of Christ, there is no separation between the Word of God and the Action of God, they are intricately united.

“In the mystery of the Incarnation, we profess with the infallible Church that there are in Christ two really distinct natures, one human like ours and one divine or of one substance with God the Father, yet united in such a way that Christ is one Person and unchanged so that each nature remains truly itself. He is God from all eternity, and became man in time. This union is called the hypostatic union, which means personal union. Christ is only one person because His two perfect natures are united in one individual.”[21]

As Christians, we are called to imitate Christ. By our nature we are human, yet by God’s Grace we are able to share in God’s divine nature. What does this mean? This means that our nature is human, but through the Grace of God we have been given the divine life, which dwells within us because of Grace. Christ shows us how to perfectly unite human nature with divine nature. Our goal as a Christian is to unite our human nature, which we were given at conception with the nature of God, which was given to us as a gift at baptism. “Grace is the supernatural gift that God, or his free benevolence, bestows on rational creatures for their eternal salvation. The gifts of grace

are essentially supernatural. They surpass the being, powers, and claims of created nature, namely sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and actual grace.”[22]

We are human by nature, which means our humanity is our natural state.. We are like God or divine by grace, which raises our humanity to a supernatural state. Supernatural literally means ‘above nature’. It is through Grace that we become fully human, lifting our human nature to the divine. Our ultimate goal is unity with God. “This state of union with God, for ‘the soul that has attained complete conformity and likeness of will (to the divine will), is totally united to and transformed in God supernaturally’.”[23] Union with God is not possible using only natural means; this is why we are given supernatural grace. If we believe that it is impossible to be united with God, then we do not believe in the supernatural power of God. For if we truly believe that it is God’s will for each of us to be united with Him, then we must believe His grace is powerful enough to make that possible.

How can we unite our human nature with the divine nature given to us through Grace? One, we can take seriously the Sacraments, which are means of Grace. We can prepare for them, accept them with whole hearts and live them out. Two, we can remember that our thoughts should be the thoughts of Christ, our words should be the words of Christ and our actions should be the actions of Christ. The word “Christian” means “little Christ” - we are to be like Christ. If our words became the words of Christ then we have united human nature with the divine life within. As a result, our human nature will shine and become most perfect because it will then be what it God created it to be, through, with and in Christ. This is what the priest prays in the Great or Final Doxology of the Mass and the faithful respond, “Amen.” “Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.”[24] God is not overtaking or destroying our human nature, but rather perfecting our human nature through Grace. Through baptism we share in the “Divine Life,” sanctifying Grace is the “seed of glory”[25] planted in our soul. Our goal should be to allow this “seed of glory” to grow and reach its potential during our life. We have a share in the Divine Life, the question is how much will we share in this Divine Life we have been given. Mary is perfect, though, with and in her Son. The Saints were made perfect and traveled the