

# BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

September 27, 2020 • 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Matthew 21:28–32

## Part of Who We Are

*The parable Jesus tells about the father who asks his two sons for help may sound familiar to those of us who have more than one child. The father in the story asks his first son to work in the vineyard. The son refuses, but later goes to work in the fields. The father approaches the second son with the same request. This son tells his father he will go, but he doesn't.*

In this parable Jesus tells us God doesn't want just lip service. God wants us to be who we say we are. For example, I like to garden, but I am not a gardener. I write short reflections like this one, but I am not a writer. I know the difference because I have a friend who is a gardener, and a husband who is a writer. I garden because I want to have a summer garden. I began writing these reflections as part of my job. If I could afford to hire a gardener or to not work, I just might not do either.

My friend Nympha, the gardener, doesn't just enjoy her summer garden. She spends all of fall, winter, and spring planning and going through seed catalogs. Her garden reflects who she is. My husband isn't paid to write; yet he writes almost daily, putting into short stories or vignettes snapshots of human experiences. His writing reflects who he is. My friend gardens and my husband writes because what they do is part of who they are. She has to garden; he has to write.

This is what God ultimately wants from us. Not just obeying the rules because we want to enjoy God's kingdom or because it's part of the job of being a Christian. God wants us to obey the rules because it's a part of who we are.

I'm not a gardener or writer, but I am a mother. My children are a part of who I am. Their needs are my needs. I think being a Christian means feeling that way about everyone, friend and foe. Taking care of others' needs as deftly as we take care of our children's or our own should be a natural response, and not done just because it is the rule. When that happens, we are not just followers of Christ; we are Christ.

### FAMILY RESPONSE

Look through a newspaper or watch a local news program together. Decide on something you can do to help someone who is in need. (Sometimes offering a prayer is the only practical or possible response.)

### PERSONAL RESPONSE

What is something you love to do—something that is a part of who you are? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?