



YEAR A – July 26, 2020

In the First Book of Kings in Chapter 3, King Solomon shows us how to pray a prayer of supplication. God is pleased with his prayer. Solomon asks for wisdom, not because it will make him rich or famous, but because it will help him to better serve his people. The key word is “service”.

In his letter to the Romans (Romans 8:28-30), St. Paul reminds us that God's intention for us is that we become like his son Jesus who came to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:28). Recall the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "... preach the Gospel every day and only if you have to - use words." Service always includes much more than words, it always includes action.

Words without action are usually empty pious thoughts. They are the sounding brass and tinkling symbols that St. Paul mentions in his letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 13:1). The people of his time had all the right words, but they did not have the right actions. They had forgotten how to love. Love for them was self-centered - the "what's in it for me" attitude that can still be found even in our own parish. The compliment to Christians used to be, “Look at these Christians, how they love each other”. It never was, “... look at how they love themselves”.

The best way to preach the Gospel is by example. Our actions always speak louder than words. Nagging people with judgmental words does not accomplish what Jesus had in mind. Going around with a long sour face, playing the role of a victim, and criticizing everyone else does not win people over to our Faith. Someone once said, “If your religion makes you happy, don't forget to tell your face”.

In the Gospel today (Matthew 13:44-52), Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God. That kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms (John 18:36). You can't find it on a map. The kingdom of God is within us. When the kingdom of God is within you, the kingdom of God is wherever you are. It is a kingdom of peace, patience, benignity, goodness, and kindness... (Galatians 5:22).

Jesus says it's like a “Pearl of Great Price”. It's like a net filled with fish of ALL kinds. It is a kingdom where ALL are welcome. Does that include people who are not Catholic? In the mind of Jesus, it does (John 17:21). There is a hunger in our world today for the kind of peace the world cannot give. That kind of peace is priceless. Pope Francis and our Bishops propose a New Evangelization to help us find that peace. What is the New Evangelization? The New Evangelization is one hungry man or woman showing another hungry man or woman where to find bread.

Recall the words of St. Theresa of Avila, “Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people.”

There are people in our world today who will never meet our Lord or learn about His Kingdom except through you. There are people who have lost their faith. The scandals in our church and the empty promises of secular humanism have done great harm.

God has chosen you and me, to invite these folks to come home. Reflect today on how you will do that.