September 15, 2019: Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

I try to get to the gym at least four to five days a week. It is important to me, not simply for the physical health benefits, but also psychologically. It is one of the few places where I generally do not think about what is happening in my life. I am focused usually on two things: the exercises themselves and praying for people in between my sets. It is great to be able to simply be focused, in a sense, on nothing in particular. But that time also helps to be able to address issues afterwards in a better way. But for exercise to work well, it depends on time, commitment and consistency.

During this past summer, for various reasons, I was not able to get to the gym for the most part. It was a little frustrating, but at the same time there was no way for me to do anything differently. Well, this past week was my return to the gym. It was awesome to be back, but at the same time it was very painful. My muscles were not used to being worked out that hard and so over the last few days I have felt them. The day after working out my legs, it was difficult to get back up after genuflecting. The funny thing is that as much as it “hurt,” it still felt good. It was like my body was reminding me that it needs to be taken care of properly. The pain that I felt in my muscles also reminded me of the importance of consistency in my workouts. It really is good to be back.

In our lives and our relationships, it is important to also remember the truth that it depends on time, commitment and consistency. It is very easy to take our relationships for granted, both with people and with God. It is really true when it comes to the people who should be most important in our lives. As I have written before, one of the things my Mom taught us was the importance of putting time into relationships. Every Sunday we went to visit my grandmother, no matter what. It was an important commitment to my Mom because her mother was important to her. The lessons she taught me about how to build and keep relationships was simply demonstrated in that simple action each week. It was never a question of whether or not we would be there. We were there. I believe it is one of the reasons that I try to have lunch with my Mom every week.

My Mom and grandmother would sit and share what happened during the week. And we were not allowed in the room to distract their conversation. In our day and age, I think we have lost touch with what makes a relationship a real relationship. In the age of social media, as people curate their lives for all to see, they present a façade and not reality. The idea of simply spending time with people face to face with nothing to get in the way is becoming more and more foreign. We “share” our experiences, not by connecting with people, but posting it on some online service and letting people know how wonderful our lives are. We have lost touch with how to simply be ourselves and be open with the people around us. People have the tendency to share the inane in order to get the most followers or the most likes, having lost how to share the reality of their lives.

The only way to build real relationships is to give time to them. Not in some general way, but actually getting together face-to-face and sharing the truth of our lives. What is actually going on? What am I struggling with? What are the difficulties of my life? Or on the other side of the coin. What are my real joys? What is good that is happening in my life? What are my expectations? Where do I see things going? It is not about curating our lives. If you cannot be honest with a person about who you are and where you are at, then you cannot have a true relationship with them. They may be an acquaintance, but they are not your friend.

But it takes more than time and honesty. It also takes commitment and consistency. No relationship can grow if a person is not committed to make that happen. It is about setting the time aside for the other in a consistent way. No relationship can flourish where there is no consistency or commitment to it. And what is true of our relationship with other people is also true of our relationship with God.

The important thing is that at times we can lose sight of that time, commitment and consistency. Much like I did this summer with my exercise. But the important thing is not that it may happen but rather what we choose to do about it. We can simply give up and forget about or we can get back to where we need to be. It can be a little painful at first but the results that are achieved are worth the pain.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@chelmsfordcatholic.org.
Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian