



Parish update from Fr. Jake Anderson

September 18, 2020

Hello Everyone, *“Why do you stand here idle all day?”*

This is a question that Jesus poses in this Sunday’s Gospel. It is the question the Landowner (representing the Lord Jesus) asks when seeing people standing idle in the marketplace. The landowner then proceeds to invite them: *“You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.”*

Americans statistically work more hours than many other countries. A solid work-ethic is in the cultural air we breathe. So, when we hear about “being idle,” we often feel quite convicted. Whether we are a retiree or a full-time student, the thought that “I” might be lazy is a dreaded accusation. Even when on vacation or taking personal time to rest, we can feel as though we should be *doing something*. Is this not why our first response to the question, “how are you doing?” is often “staying busy!” As if “not being busy” was a condemnation of our person. I sometimes joke that the only mortal sin of an American is not being busy.

However, when Jesus asks, “why do you stand here idle all day?” it is not about merely “staying busy.” To interpret it this way would make Jesus a sort of spiritual CEO or a divine economist only interested in increasing the labor force participation rate. Now, mind you, St. Paul does say: *“one who does not work should not eat”* but that is a topic for a different day which concerns the duty and dignity of work.

But the emphasis for us is not merely working but *working in his vineyard*, in his kingdom. In a sense, we are always working for one kingdom or other. Sometimes it is simply the kingdom of our own self will vs. the Kingdom of God (God’s will). Just because we call ourselves Christian does not necessarily mean we are working in the kingdom of Christ. Recall our Lord’s words, *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I command?”*

Let us not forget that the Enemy often seeks to infiltrate into the Father’s “good soil” and sow seeds of weeds (evil). We can see the growth of these weeds in our hearts when we live governed and ruled by our sinful appetites. Learning to live in and for the Kingdom of Christ, as opposed to my own kingdom, is integral to the art of being Christian. This is the life of sanctifying grace, the life of living in my identity as son or daughter of the Father.

There was once a Franciscan, Gabriele of Volterra, who lived in an elegant manner even though he was considered the greatest scholar and preacher in the order of his

time. Saint Catherine of Siena was not hesitant to declare to him one day, “How is it possible for you to understand anything of that which pertains to the kingdom of God, you who live only for the world?” Quite convicting I must say!

One very fruitful thing I have found in helping me live for the Lord’s kingdom and not merely my own is called the ‘morning offering’. I have found that it helps align my will to the will of God and his kingdom. It seems to be most fruitful when it is reflective, purposeful and prayed as a beggar would pray for bread. It can be prayed in many variations, either in memorized form or spontaneous. Here is one variation I like from St. Ignatius of Loyola who was all about living in the Divine Will of the Lord Jesus.

*“Take, Lord, and receive
all my liberty, my memory and my entire will.
All that I have and possess.
You have given all to me,
To You O Lord, I return it.
All is yours, dispose of it holy according to your will
Give me only your love and your grace
For this is sufficient for me. Amen.*

Here are some pastoral updates!

- As mentioned in last Sunday's Masses, we would love you to bring your Bibles (or missal) to Mass every Sunday and mark the Sunday readings with bookmarks. Two main reasons for this: To follow along with the readings since we no longer have missalettes in the pews and 2) so that the homily can be more fruitful with people having a “visual aid.” We thank you!
- A shout out to all of our parishioners who are not able to come to Mass or be physically present at St. Lawrence. I love you, miss you, and pray for you often!
- For those with celiac disease who normally receive a low-gluten host, our process for receiving Holy Communion has changed. Simply approach the main Communion line and mention a low-gluten host. We will now always have consecrated hosts in a separate pix. No need to bring your own pix or approach the sacristy before Mass.
- Do you know of anyone who is **interested in becoming Catholic?** OR, anyone who is just wanting to know more about the Catholic faith? Please have them contact Bro. Gary Davis (brogary@brohope.net) to learn more. Our next Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program will begin in late September.
- We so appreciate and gratefully welcome your financial generosity! Particularly if you are “a regular” (and even if you are not) at St. Lawrence, we invite you to consider [giving electronically on our website](#). Nothing is too small or insignificant.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Jake