

Homily - Year 23 A - September 6, 2020

I have a confession to make. Now, don't panic. This is not role reversal, and I hope that I will not shock you. In fact, actually, I have two confessions to make.

First, I very seldom do Facebook, and I let the birds do most of the tweeting. Many of you know how techy I am. I hold a ham radio license and I respond quickly to email. Only since coming to Waddington and Madrid, have I started texting. Some may wonder how I can face reality without Facebook or Instagram.

Now, why do I bring up social networking? We hear Jesus describe in today's gospel how to correct our friends or enemies if we have been wronged. Talk to the person one on one is the simple but very profound advice that Jesus gives. If the offender does not change, then bring in some witnesses while you explain to the offender why you have been wronged. If that doesn't work, then go to the assembly, the church, and let the church decide.

But what do we do instead? We talk to everyone else about how we have been wronged. Not only do we talk to others, we now use various social networking techniques to blab to others about others. Jesus' formula is that we build bridges. What we do, including social networking, builds barriers.

Not only do we talk about the faults and mistakes of others, we sometimes build up what I would call "savings accounts" of their errors. You have offended me so that gives me the right to chalk up that one offense. You offend me a second time, then I can make another deposit. So, we build up these savings accounts of offenses believing that we can cash them in some day and really get even with the one who has offended us.

Jesus' simple method tells us to repair the damage right away even if we have not caused the damage. That formula applies to human and civil situations, to work situations, and to the church environment. From a human point of view, we should build up one another. You can't do that while harboring grudges, hurts, and petty peeves. Likewise, we cannot build up the body of Christ, the Church, when we let annoyances fester.

In all of this, please remember that if you are offended in any way, no matter where it is, make sure that you are not the one who is at fault.

Sometimes, we are quick to judge and place blame on others when we should be placing the blame on ourselves.

Now, here's a second confession. I do not watch reality television. The Biggest Loser is not part of my repertoire, Jersey Shore is not my idea of a shore vacation, Real Housewives are quite unreal. I have seen enough reality TV to know that this so-called reality must change.

Why you may ask? Well, as Jesus says in today's gospel, and and I pointed out earlier, we must build up others, society, and the church. It seems to me that many of these reality TV shows are like instruction manuals on how to bring out and encourage the worst in people rather than their best. Reality TV creates situations for people to display, for lack of a better term, their darker side. Whether it's ripping someone else's clothes on Jerry Springer, conniving to get someone thrown off the island, plotting to get someone else fired....., or even publicly displaying one's ignorance on Judge Judy....none of that brings out the best in us.

As sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. we have a dignity that comes to us from being made in the image and likeness of God, redeemed through the saving waters of Baptism. That dignity is restored when we celebrate the sacrament of penance and is enriched each time we celebrate the Eucharist. Let us make sure that we are always building up God's people, whether one person at a time or as a group, rather than tearing down. Because of Jesus Christ, we are really so much better than we sometimes portrays ourselves. May we always reflect the greatness that God has given us!