



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

August 23, 2020

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

There is a beautiful story about the pencil. The pencil maker took the pencil aside, just before putting it into the box. "There are five things you need to know," he told the pencil, "before I send you out into the world. Always remember them and never forget, and you will become the best pencil you can be. One: You will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in someone's hand. Two: You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become a better pencil. Three: You will be able to correct any mistakes you might make. Four: The most important part of you will always be what's inside. And Five: On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write."

The same applies to each one of us too. When we find an answer to Jesus' question ("Who do **you** say that I am?"), we will be able to make ourselves useful to our contemporaries. We have to undergo the process that the pencil undergoes. One: We will be able to do many great things, but only if we allow ourselves to be held in God's hand, and allow other human beings access to the many gifts we possess. Two: We will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, by going through various problems in life, but we'll need it to become a stronger person. Three: We will be able to correct any mistakes we might make. Four: The most important part of us will always be what's on the inside. And Five: On every surface we walk through, we must leave our mark. No matter what the situation, we must continue to do our duties to the best of our abilities.

However, first we should accept Jesus as the Son of God and our personal Savior. This means that we are accepting Jesus as our Good Shepherd, our Divine Savior and our Redeemer. Next, Jesus should become a living experience for us – as our God protecting us and providing for us in our life's journey, loving us, forgiving us, helping us, and transforming our lives and outlook. This is made possible by our listening to Jesus through the daily, meditative reading of the Bible, by talking to Jesus through daily, personal, communal and liturgical prayers, by offering our lives on the altar with Jesus whenever we participate in the Holy Mass, by receiving him in holy Communion, and by leading exemplary lives as we cooperate with His grace.

Our personal experience of Jesus will also lead us to praise and thank God in all the events of our lives, both good pleasant and painful, realizing that God's loving hands are behind everything. We need to surrender our lives to Jesus, our Lord and Savior. That surrender requires that we freely give all areas of our lives to Jesus and radiate to all around us Jesus' sacrificial *agápe* love, unconditional forgiveness, overflowing mercy, and committed service. The joy, the love, and the peace that we find in Jesus need to be reflected in the way we live our whole lives. We also surrender our lives to Jesus by rendering humble, loving service to others with the strong conviction that Jesus is present in every person.

*Authored by Fr. Tony Kadavil for reflection*