

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

A couple of days this week, rather than bearing the Heat Wave, were actually a little cool. It almost felt a bit like Autumn. And with Fall, comes the return to school. Sorry kids, but it's coming. In fact the Seminary will kick off it's 2021-2022 school year (Tomorrow) on Monday with their Mass of the Holy Spirit and Inaugural Address. They are just winding up their new student Orientation, part of which was a tour of St. Mary's on Wednesday night. I ran the Orientation program at the seminary for over a decade, and it was always uplifting to see the new guys come in with that deer in the headlight look, But, more importantly, also on fire for the Lord.

I mention that, because of the reading for Today. Our scripture selections seem to center around choices and commitments. In fact, in the first reading, Joshua asks quite openly, "Whom will you serve? Decide today, will you serve the God of your Fathers (Yahweh), or the other gods of this land, the gods of the Amorites?????"

And in the Gospel, Jesus experiences an exodus of followers after he offers some difficult preaching about the true presence, and he himself being the Bread of Life which must be eaten, and he confronts the 12—"Do you also want to leave?" Do you wish to return to your former way of life?

Again, I'm reminded of the men on the hilltop on orientation, a group of men who have seen the world and all of its allurements and stand with Simon Peter saying, "Master to whom shall we go? You (Jesus Christ) have the words of eternal life." And so they have answered along with Joshua.. "We will serve the Lord!"

Now, they will be answering the call and serving the Lord in a unique way as seminarians, and God-willing ordained priests one day. But that way isn't for everyone. In the second reading, Paul tells the Ephesians how husbands and wives are able to be Christ-like in loving and serving their spouses and families. A lot of feminist poo poo the part about wives being subordinate to their husbands, and most men know that doesn't really happen anyway, but the point is to be mutually ABOUT the other; Putting the needs of your spouse and children first. And isn't that a basic premise of Christianity anyway, to treat others as we would ourself. Putting the needs of others first?

Only serving ourselves selfishly is what Satan tries to trick us into doing.

Some of you out there may remember Bob Dylan, the folk singer whose been croaking out songs for over fifty years. In the late 70's he had a Christian conversion experience and in 79, he produced an Album called **A Slow Train Comin**. And one of the songs on that album is entitled, **Gotta Serve Somebody**, and in it he speculates, "... You may be an ambassador to England or France.... You may like to gamble, you might like to dance.. . You may be the heavyweight champion of the world.... You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.... But, You're gonna have to serve somebody..... Yes indeed, you're gonna have to serve somebody..... Now, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord... but you're gonna have to serve.... Somebody.

And I'm here to ask you today here in St. Mary's Church, Mt. Angel, Oregon, in ranks before God, As Joshua did of the tribes of Israel in Shechem, "Whom will you serve?"

Now, obviously, you have some sense of commitment to the Lord, or you wouldn't be here today. You've consciously decided to come to this mass.

But, I want us all to re-affirm with Simon Peter, that, "We have come to believe... and are convinced that YOU, Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, are the holy one of God."

And as for Me.... And my house.... We will serve the LORD!