

**Homily for the Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C
St. Thomas the Apostle Church – West Springfield, Massachusetts
October 6, 2019**



Scripture Readings: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4 ✕ Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9 ✕ 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14 ✕ Luke 17:5-10

The news media brings news to our attention in a way it was never able to do in the past. With cable TV, the internet, and news alerts on our mobile phones and tablets, we hear about news, literally, as it is happening. Unfortunately, so much of that news is “bad news.” There are times when it seems like we never hear any good news and our knowledge of all the turmoil in our world can cause us to start to feel despair.

It seems, too, that the primary response to all of the bad news is to politicize our concerns and simply look to governing authorities to take responsibility for everything that needs to be done. Sometimes the response to all the bad news is to look only for a rational response, instead of a prayerful one.

People of faith come in many different varieties: there are people who simply pray for miracles and then there are those who “go into the trenches,” so to speak, to get things done but who do so with a sense of prayer: they pray to God for the strength and wisdom to deal with the problems they are trying to tackle and they also make their work a prayer.

Our Scripture readings today all point to the unity of prayer and service. People like St. Vincent de Paul, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and Dorothy Day, who began the Catholic Worker Movement, were people who believed in the power of God but also believed that God gave them certain gifts, talents, and abilities to bring the grace of God into some very serious problems in our world; people who used these gifts to make better the lives of the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed. Their prayers and their actions were tightly interwoven.

It is true that we cannot go through the world as individuals who right every wrong. But we can go through life praying for every suffering person and we can do something about it in the part of the world in which we live.

In the coming weeks, some of the young people of our parish will begin their final preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In a few months, when they celebrate their Confirmation, it will be the culmination of their catechetical training for the past several years and the beginning of a new commitment to practicing their faith in worship, word, and action.

Part of the final preparation for Confirmation always involves service to those in need and a reflection on how this service to the needy is an integral part of the faith life of every Christian. It’s important for every Christian to make this connection and to live it out as much as possible but, especially for the teens of our Church.

The young people of our Church are not just the future of the Church, they are also the Church of the present time. At every stage of our lives, we are not only called but we are given the gifts to bring our lives to prayer and then to go back and make a positive impact on the lives of those with whom we have contact, especially those most in need. We’re never too young and never too old to answer that call. And God is with us, every step of the way, to guide us, to be with us, and to work through us.

This week, let us take at least one opportunity to pray for someone we know who is struggling or suffering and then to reach out, even in a small way, to let them know that we care. ✕