



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Christopher Comerford
July 2, 2017 Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I 2nd Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

Psalm 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19

Reading II Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Gospel Mathew 10:37-42

Homily

If you are like me, your life is pretty busy. It is hard to find time to get everything in with all of the responsibilities and desires and commitments that we have. It seems like we just get more and more busy all the time. I think that is why we need to hear this Gospel to remind us of what is most important. Jesus sets that out today by first showing his Apostles and then us that we can't put anything before God, before Him. He is letting the Apostles know that God needs to be first, even before other very important people and things — father, mother, son, daughter, our family that means so much to us — our career, our job, the activities we are involved in, our marriage. None of that needs to be ahead of our relationship with Christ — Christ needs to be first.

That can be a challenge because so often in life, I know what happens to me when I get busy, it seems like God is the one who gets pushed to the side. It just kind of happens. I don't have time to pray. I have this to do and I have to do that. So God, I will give you the little bit I have left and sometimes it is at night and then I fall asleep, that's what happens. It is a challenge to find that special time to give to God. One of the things I learned that we need to pray, and if we say we are too busy to pray the busier we are the more we need to turn to God. And I have found in my own life, and I am sure you have, that when we spend that time giving it to God we seem to have even more time to get done what we need to get done. When I am pushing prayer to the side, when I get frazzled, I do not get as much accomplished. I am not motivated to do what I need to do. But when I put God first everything falls in place and it seems like I have even more time to do each of the things I need to do.

So that is the challenge. God is telling us, "Don't compromise, even as a family and the things we need to do." And he is also telling us, "We need to take up our cross." That is the challenge. We are each faced with different challenges each day. It is easier to say, "I am going to walk away. I don't want to deal with this." But we have to; we have to follow the example of Jesus himself who took up his cross for us. It is different for each one of us. There are different amounts of pain and suffering and challenges that we meet. But he is there with us and has set that example of how we can carry our cross.

Sometimes we have to go even further. “Whoever finds his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Death affects all of us along the way, and is particularly hard when it is those we love. But there are also smaller deaths that we go through that he thinks we need to die to in our own lives: To die to some of the individual desires we have, and to die to sin. Saint Paul reminds us how to do that and how we are to connect to this. He has told us that we are baptized. We are baptized into Christ’s death. We have to die with him in order to rise again. That fullness of life is such a challenge and it often happens in ways and times we don’t understand — but Jesus has promised to be with us and in our willingness to lay down our lives, he promises us that fullness of life, the eternal life that never ends. That does give us hope to move on when faced with these little deaths each and every day.

The challenges that we face go even further when we are called to show love and hospitality to others. Jesus is telling us that if you receive a prophet or a righteous man, or even give a cup of cold water — that is part of having that reward and having that sense of goodness. It is amazing — this Gospel fits right into stewardship, doesn’t it? It fits right in with what we are focused on: the time, our talent and our treasure doing all of this for the glory of God. What a great reflection Jesus give us. Hopefully, we have that sense of hospitality.

You heard about Lydia in the first Reading when she gave a place to stay to Elisha, and he asked, “What can we do for her?”

“Well, she has this desire for a child.” Elisha said, “She will have a child.” What a great gift and promise in response to her hospitality. So hopefully we can have that sense always. How can we reach out in love to others? Not just those we know and love, but to all people.

I have been shown a great deal of hospitality by so many of you and what a blessing it has been. Kind words and the openness you have shown me means the world to me. And there are a lot of ways you can show this hospitality. One of the ways is — I don’t like to cook. I am not very good at it. I do like to eat though, that is clear I know. So, a little hospitality, bring a little food, invite me over, or go out to a restaurant and it gives you a chance to be hospitable and me a chance to get to know you. And thank you for that blessing, and it is very practical in all that is happening this weekend.

Take this message to heart: Jesus wants us to have what is best and we have to start with our relationship with him. Everything is better when it starts with him. Let’s pray for the strength to never forget this — to put God above all things. And when we learn to do that then we know that love and share that love with others.

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