Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

09.22.19

***WHO DOES OUR HEART BELONG TO?***

Fr. Viviano

Today we enter the Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time.

There were a couple things I shared at the Mass at St. Joseph’s and one of the things was I started to put the Holy Water by the Holy Water font in the vestibule. We have done this here for a long time, but I wanted to remind everyone that we will continue to put the bottles back there, for you to take them and use them. When you take the Holy Water home and bless one another, bless your children, especially the little ones. At bedtime when you are saying night time prayers they get excited and say “Oh, don’t forget the blessing! Get the Holy Water!” They love that!

It is part of our Catholic heritage; the sacramentals. Sacramentals impart blessings upon us, not the blessing of a priest but nonetheless a blessing. You can do that. Sacramentals… crucifix, candles, rosaries, holy water, etc. can draw us closer into the life of Christ. Holy water reminds us of our baptism – the cleansing waters. There is someone at St. Joseph’s, a parishioner who has been in the hospital for a while. I took her husband a bottle of Holy Water like this (Father holds up a bottle of Holy Water) and I said to him, “Bless her every day.” This has given him so much hope. When I go visit them he says, “I’ve been blessing her every day!” He blesses her making the sign of the cross on her head and hands and feet. And also in the hospital room there are some holy pictures. Someone brought her a statue of the Blessed Mother and Mass cards and a crucifix. She has her own “little grotto” there. She is surrounded by holy things that can inspire us. Sacramentals are a good way to remind us that we are not in this alone – that we do have Divine Assistance and that we are moving somewhere beyond this earth. God is not abandoning us – He is with us.

I encourage you always to use the Holy Water in your home.

I wanted to mention too…you always see me purifying the sacred vessels. After Communion I pour water in the sacred vessels. Purification the vessels is about consuming all the Precious Blood in the chalice and the consuming of all the Precious Fragments of the Host that were not consumed.   
Just a little catechesis. The priest or deacon can either do this during Mass or do it after Mass. You see me doing this during Mass, and there is a reason for that – some of it is simply because of timing because if I am in a rush going from one Mass to the other, I do not want to get in a tight spot and not purify the vessels. You will see the deacon, he will purify after Mass which is one of the things he can do. He can do to this because of his diaconate ordination. You will never see a deacon purify at the altar. That action is really reserved for the priest. (This is) just so you know some of the why and what, of what is going on with purifying.

I also want to mention this because I mentioned it at St. Joseph’s (here it is not an issue). Next week we will be moving the presiders chair and placing it on the side like it is here at St. Anthony. In the bulletin there is some catechesis, training, learning, that comes from the General Missal on the Mass…like why we have certain things in certain places – like the priest chair – why it is where it should be.

Always remembering that the three main pieces in the Catholic church are the tabernacle where Christ resides, the altar of sacrifice and the crucifix. The priest is not to impede those things. It is possible for him to impede them, given the placement of the chair.

Today Jesus in the Gospel clearly says, “You can’t serve two masters! You can’t serve God and mammon at the same time.” Mammon, an ancient word that means wealth…riches – the personification of that would be ‘the god of wealth, the god of riches’. Somebody could say “Well I’ve done pretty well Father.” Yes, God has blessed you in that way. God wants to know what is in first place in your life. What / Who does your heart belong to? I know it can be challenging. I know in my life prior to coming to the seminary that wealth can potentially plague you…it can give you a false sense of security. Of course it is an illusion – just an illusion. Because each and every one of us in the end… our balance, whether it is ten million or a dollar will go to zero! There is nothing about fame and wealth, portfolios or stocks in heaven. It all boils down to where is my heart…to what or who or where does my heart belong? Who is my master?

And it certainly does not just belong to those who were blessed with resources. We can have a load of money or live paycheck to paycheck…but the question is: WHERE DOES MY HEART BELONG?

There was a guy I used to work with when I was in the produce business. There were a handful of us in this group. We were all doing very well. We were having a conversation, and within the conversation I think he was giving someone assistance one day and he said, “Every single day I give away a certain amount of money (he did not give the exact amount) every single day, to someone or some place in need.” I was not at that “mental place” in my own life at that time, but in retrospect I think… ‘what a great way, what a great reminder that “my treasure” really does not belong to me….a constant reminder that I am to bless those around me, with what I have been blessed with.’

I always remember and fondly retell the story of my Grandmother Viviano who raised her six children on her own. The kids used to have odd jobs and they would bring their money home. They would parcel out the money on the kitchen table. Grandma said that the first parsing was for the poor. Uncle Jerry would tell the story, that he would say, “*Mom we ARE the poor*”.

That was such a great model for her children. And they embraced that throughout their lives, regardless of where they landed on the financial scale they always give. When I think about my grandmother, my dad used to help her out all the time throughout her life. She was not interested in things for herself – a new this, a new that….she would write checks to the missions (chuckle). Her big thing was dad would give her a trip to Lourdes or Fatima. She so loved these holy places where Our Lady appeared…things that were not material things in life. What a great, great example for all of us. Obviously I remember these things as her grandson…I remember them forty years later – such a great reminder of who my heart should belong to?

A wise man once said, God gave us two hands, one to receive the blessings that He gives… and the other hand to give those blessings away. The money comes, and the money goes. It is not really ours to cling to. He gives us these two hands to fold together, to thank Almighty God for the blessings we have been given… to take care of our families…to have the wisdom and knowledge to know we that we are called to pass those blessings to the other.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…Amen!

*Our Lady Queen of the Rosary*

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*Pray for us!*