

HOMILY ~ OCTOBER 1/2, 2022

27th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

There was a woman who worked for a nonprofit called "Teach America." She was sent to Duke University to recruit. As most of you know, Duke is one of the most prestigious universities in the country, and she was wondering why she was sent there. She thought none of these students would be interested in the jobs she had to offer, and it was reflected in her presentation. She said: *"I can tell by looking at all of you that I have probably come to the wrong place. You would not be on this campus if you were not successful and heading for successful jobs. I am here to try and talk one of you into giving away your life to the toughest job you will ever have. I am looking for people to go into the hollows of West Virginia or into one of the ghettos of South Los Angeles to teach in some of the most difficult schools in the world, to give these kids a chance. But I can tell by looking at you that none of you would be interested in that. So go on to law school or whatever successful thing you are planning on doing. I am going to leave some brochures here if you would happen to be interested,"* and then she sat down. A crowd of students rushed up the aisle and began snatching up the brochures. You see, she had underestimated these students. They did not all want to be doctors or lawyers. They wanted to find something that had meaning for them.

In the Gospel Reading, we hear a parable about a master and a servant. I think there are a couple of lessons that I would like to talk about today. First, I think we need to let God be our master, and we should be his servant. He has a plan for each one of us, he loves us more than we love ourselves and he wants what is best for us. His plan is better than ours.

Second, whatever we are called to be and do, we need to do that in the best way we can. If you are a master, be a good master. If you are a servant, be the best servant you can be. There are certain callings that have status in our culture: doctors, lawyers, rich wealthy business men and women, famous actors, actresses and musicians. You know who they are. But just like the students at Duke, we are not all called to be doctors and lawyers. Not that there is anything wrong with doctors and lawyers, we need good ones. But if it is not your calling, it could lead to a very unhappy life. When I hear young people choosing an occupation because they could make a lot of money, I hope that is not the only thing they are considering or they are probably going to be very unhappy. We need to know our gifts and charisms, and then discern how we can use them to help other people. We need to allow ourselves to be guided by God. All work has dignity and all are needed. I look back at the lockdown during COVID and remember all of the people that were essential in allowing us to continue to live. The people that risked their lives every day and went to work to serve us, health care professionals, grocery store workers, gas station attendants, drug store workers, trash collectors, first responders, police, fire fighters and on and on. We called them heroes at the time; do we still recognize the value of their work?

We take time to discern the big decisions in our lives, but I think it is the little decisions we make each day that are the decisions that really affect our lives. Studies show that 43% of the things we do each day are done by habit without thinking about them. We need to bring these things to our attention and pray about them to see if they are in line with what God is calling us to do. Sometimes, I think I wish God would speak a little louder so I can hear what he is calling me to do, but I think God is speaking as loud as he is going to speak. I think that we need to find quiet places in our lives

so we can hear his voice. That is prayer.

I am going to recommend that you consider a particular prayer today, it is called the **EXAMEN**. I suggest that you spend five minutes at the end of the day with this prayer. Before you begin, remind yourself that you are in God's presence.

Gratitude: *Recall anything from the day for which you are especially grateful, and give thanks.*

Review: *Recall the events of the day, from the start to finish, noticing where you felt God's presence, and where you accepted or turned away from any invitations to grow in love.*

Sorrow: *Recall any actions for which you are sorry.*

Forgiveness: *Ask for God's forgiveness. Decide whether you want to reconcile with anyone you have hurt.*

Grace: *Ask God for the grace you need for the next day and an ability to see God's presence more clearly.*

From *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* by James Martin SJ (pgs. 95-97)

There are just a couple of things I want you to know about Proposal 3. If it passes, there would be abortion upon demand for the entire nine months. Someone could have an abortion the day before their due date. Think about what that means. Secondly, minor children could have an abortion without their parents consent and actually without their knowledge. I think children need their parents. I suggest that you think and pray about these two things, and then vote your conscience.

Love & Peace,
Fr. Jim