

HOMILY ~ 6TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 16, 2025

There was a family that was going through a really difficult time and they had to sell everything they had to pay the bills and put food on the table. One day when the family came home, they found the door off the hinges. Someone had broken in. When the police got there they asked the father, "What did the burglars get?" He said, "Practice breaking in, I guess. There was nothing to take." Let's face it. No one wants to be poor.

In the Gospel reading today we heard "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours." The word blessed can be replaced with happy. Happy are you who are poor, really? Who is happy to be poor? I suppose this gives hope to people who will never be able to get out of poverty, but most of us at St. Edith are not in that position. Today I would like to apply that beatitude to something more relevant to us. I would like to apply it to work, what we do for money.

A study was done of college students and 82% reported that financial success was what school was primarily for. The number one consideration in picking a job opportunity was potential income. Now income is an important factor to consider but it worries me a little because our young people could end up making a lot of money in a job that they hate. We spend too many years working to be doing something that we hate. Psychologists refer to it as the golden handcuffs, doing a job you hate and feeling trapped in it because you are making a lot of money.

Another study was done regarding how people feel about their jobs. About 30% love their job, about 20% hate their job and about 50% were in the middle. Studies have shown that income is not the most important factor in determining job satisfaction. Once you have enough to put food on the table, have a comfortable place to live and your material needs are met, an increase in income did not lead to greater job satisfaction. Now you would think that the job itself would be a big factor in job satisfaction, like lawyer, physician, nurse, or engineer. But studies have shown that the job itself was not the most

important factor in job satisfaction. For example, pest control may be considered one of the worst jobs to have, wages are relatively low, you are exposed to dangerous chemicals and you are in contact with all kinds of critters. They interviewed someone doing pest control and he loved his job. He feels that he is really helping people. He gets rid of critters that people are afraid to have in their home. He makes a point of getting out and starting the process as quickly as possible because he knows how upsetting this can be. When he encounters people with bed bugs, he assures them that this has nothing to do with cleanliness and they should not feel shame. He knows how to get rid of pests and he does that for people that do not know how to do it for themselves. He likes being able to problem solve on difficult cases, he does a variety of activities and has some autonomy on how he does things.

Job satisfaction depends more upon how you see your work. If you work primarily for financial gain, money is most important. If you see your work as a career, getting promoted is most important. If you see your work as a calling, you are more likely to have job satisfaction. We talk a lot about finding our calling, what God is calling us to do. This involves bringing your strengths, your gifts or your charisms to the work place. It also means helping people. This is consistent with Jesus' commandment to love and serve one another. For the 50% of people who feel neutral about their job, you may be able to increase your job satisfaction by making some adjustments in the job you have now. Maybe what gives your work meaning and satisfaction is not in your job description. Maybe you are the one who helps a coworker when they are behind with their work. Maybe you are the one who checks in with people at work and encourages them when they are feeling down. Maybe you are the one who adds some humor when things get too serious. We find meaning and satisfaction in volunteer work. There are a lot of people doing volunteer work and it is not for the money. I have talked to a lot of people who are finding meaning and satisfaction in work they do after retirement. They needed to make good money when their family was young. But after retirement, money may not be as important and they can finally do what they feel called to do.

Let's face it. None of us wants to be poor, but if you find your calling, you may not get rich, but you will have a more meaningful and satisfying life.