

**“Lord, make my heart meek and humble like yours.”**

Do you believe that the Gospel has power to change your life and the lives of others? Jesus gave his disciples a two-fold commission to speak in his name and to act with his power. The core of the Gospel message is quite simple: *the kingdom of God is imminent!* The kingdom is those men and women who freely submit to God and who honor Him as their Lord and King.

Jesus also commissioned his disciples to carry on the works which he did—bringing the healing power and mercy of God to the weary and oppressed. The Gospel has power to set people free from sin, sickness, fear, and oppression. The Lord Jesus will free us from anything that keeps us from loving him and our neighbor with joy and confidence.

This weekend we celebrate National Vocation awareness. How important it is that we reflect on our duty to pray for vocations. Paul speaks as a loving father to the community in Thessalonica, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today: He speaks of his love and concern for his people and the reality of long hours, “working day and night” for his people who have become “so dearly beloved to him.” Paul gives thanks for their reception of the Word of God, “...you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God...”. Any apostle would take pride in having received the call, the opportunity to ‘bring the word of God to the people’. You will never get tired of working day and night, when your heart is for the Lord and given to his service.

As a shepherd, I always felt, it’s a joy, working for you and the parish the long hours, and it’s all worthwhile. How much am I thankful for your desire to know and love God and to be more fully growing to Christ. How much I should be thankful for your faith in Christ and how you build up this parish. This is all because of the call that God placed in my heart to be a priest. The faith and love of Christ that I see in this community keeps me serving with joy, even amidst the trials and struggles.

Today’s gospel exhorts us, “The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

God has a calling on our lives. Every vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and marriage, is rooted in sacrificial love. Without a servant's heart that is willing to die to self, to lift up the good of the other, the call that God has on our life will not flourish. We need to ask God for the graces to live out our vocation in humility and to call forth young men and women to consider how God is calling them to sacrificial love. (Decrease in vocations)

Our society tells us that being right, being first, being the best is all important. But this is not in the spirit of the Gospel. There is only one thing bad about being right, or first or best, and that one thing is, doing something just to be right or just to be the best or just to be the first. Jesus tells us to be humble, to be the servant of all. It's in our nature to put ourselves first. Christ tells us not to, he tells us to put others first and serve them, and then you are serving the Lord himself.

There is a huge difference between doing your best and being best. Being the best student, the best mom/dad, the best anything you can be, *is good*, it's holy and it will bear fruit. Being better than anyone else is pointless and will only lead to conflict. We need to use our skills for others, welcome their needs, their vulnerabilities.

Following our Lord is not easy. He never promised it would be. Responding to his call is challenging. Selflessness is not in our nature. If you are to be a follower of Christ, you need to put your human nature last to enable you to put your spiritual nature first. You need to work hard, but always for others, strive to do your best, but resist the urge just to be the first, the best, if you are the best thank God that you are able to serve so well.

Jesus' call to be humble, is hard. It's one we will all find difficult, and without prayer and a strong relationship with a loving God we may find impossible. But we have a loving God, one who is humble and selfless, who gave himself for us, who forgives us, and is ready to help us if we just ask in prayer for help. Let's pray for help in bringing peace, pray that you may be a seed of the peacemaker and bring all, a harvest of holiness.