

13th Sunday Ordinary Time

June 30-July 1, 2018

Readings: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; 2 Cor. 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

In our readings today, there is a particular theme of helpfulness that runs throughout the various readings. Think for just a moment of a time in the past, perhaps even recently, in which someone helped you. Now ask yourself, “What was my response?” Was it one of gratitude? I suspect it was.

But it is also the case, especially it seems for men, that perhaps you may have felt that you needed to let them know, “Thanks...I owe you” or words to that effect. It is most likely a figure of speech, a throwaway line, and yet it may also betray an attitude in which we feel as though we are in debt to another, and are not entirely comfortable with that.

“For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” Paul’s prayer for the people of Corinth was that they may abound in the works of charity. And someday that charity will return, for the aim, the goal, is to be present in another’s need. That need can go in cycles, for

When works of charity are done in a spirit of competition, they do not originate from the heart. Acts of charity can even be done thoughtlessly, such that they lose some meaning. While sending flowers to congratulate someone is a nice gesture, I’ll bet you that many would prefer to receive a phone call.

We are told that our works of charity must abound. I take that to mean that we ought not to count them, because it is an attitude that we seek, much more than the frequency of acts. How do we manage this when we are all so busy with taking care of our own needs? This is a legitimate question, it seems to me.

Living by the adage of offering a good deed every day is not only a worthy goal, but one that keeps us focused on the virtue of charity. What did I do today to show forth kindness? Do you see someone in the grocery store with a much smaller number of items, ask them if they wish to go ahead of you. Could you spare the extra few minutes? What's the harm?

“True holiness,” Mother Teresa had written, “consists in doing God’s will with a smile.”

She once said: “To God there is nothing small. The moment we have given it to God, it becomes infinite... There is always the danger that we may do work for the sake of the work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in – that we do it for God... and that’s why we try to do it as beautifully as possible.”

To do something beautiful for God is the real fruit of an active life of prayer and it need not be something amazing. It is the everyday ways in which we encounter others, say “Good morning,” hold a door, wave someone ahead in heavy traffic, and the list goes on.

Notice how in the Gospel, Jesus ordered that no one share the news of the miracle he had just performed. Perhaps there is a sign there as well, namely that we ought not to count the good deeds.

The important thing is that we are intentional about our actions. We may even choose to do something and not tell others. We just do it, and never even share the act, but realize that “God knows.” That is good enough.