

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Oct 24th 2013

I found today's passage from Paul and today's Gospel particularly difficult to grasp the first time that I read through the texts. They do not seem to convey Jesus' message of love and acceptance, rather they seem to call for judgment and obedience. I read them from the context of a frustrated Paul and a frustrated Jesus. Both are in contact with people who say that they accept the message, but they do not follow through. They are both feeling short on support.

When we are committed to something greater than ourselves, a sign of our real commitment is the demonstration of support. I know the most challenging times in my marriage have been the times during which either my wife or I did not feel that the other's support was being lived out. It is not hard to feel that that the other giving less than his or her share and that kind of feeling easily leads to frustration. Two weeks ago my wife had surgery. This demanded a significant change in my lifestyle. For a brief while I ended up with all of the responsibility. It was valuable to see how much was my wife was doing on a daily basis that often went unnoticed or at the very least unappreciated. She did notice all that that I was doing and she was grateful. Here is where we might want the story to end. I would like to say that I want to keep doing all of these things in grateful service, but I can't. I have neither the time nor the energy to keep this up for an extended period of time given all of my other responsibilities. I am not resentful; I am just tired. (This experience gave me a much greater degree of empathy for single parents.) I made verbal promises to love, honor and cherish my wife in sickness and in health. "In health" is much easier than "in sickness".

My point is as humans we get tired. We also get lazy. It is easy to fall short in our lived out actions. Sometimes it takes a stern message to remind one to get on track and to stay on track. Other times the course of events brings the message home. Sometimes it is the cry for help of partner sharing a common mission saying that I need your support and I do not always feel it is there. Other times it is a lesson from a first hand experience of the everything that the partner in mission does, coming to know the daily sacrifices that as well as the great sacrifices, that gives one the sense of support that one needs.

Today I pray for awareness of the sacrifices made throughout Salvation History. I pray in gratitude for the sense of support these sacrifices bring. I pray that I may respond with strength, commitment and appreciation.

I pray for those who may be feeling short on support. I pray for awareness of the sacrifices, great and small, of those around me today. I pray in gratitude for the sense of support these sacrifices bring. I again pray that I may respond with strength, commitment and appreciation.

Mike Cherney