

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 9th 2016

Good old family grudges. How many families are filled with members who harbor a deep seated resentment to one another; often for something as trivial as not being invited to their niece's three hour dance recital? For some inexplicable reason something as meaningless as this will be the cornerstone that they build upon and over time the family members will start to distance themselves from each other and ultimately divide. What is sad and so ironic is that these divided families are probably the very same ones who are in church well before the processional and never leave Mass early. Maybe it is even you?

We all know that the Gospel of the Lord is about love, compassion and forgiveness and we often times go out of our way to show our love, care, compassion and concern for those less fortunate who are around us. We help our older neighbor take her trash to the curb, volunteer to serve meals at the soup kitchen or maybe even lead the office drive to raise money to buy school supplies for needy children. For some, we will literally fall over ourselves trying to help a complete total stranger. Why, because this is what God asks of us, to love and serve others; and, let's face it, after we have done a good deed for others we usually feel pretty good about ourselves and about realizing the compassion and love for other that dwells within us.

But then why do we have trouble showing this same love, care, compassion and concern for those who are closest to us, our brother, sisters and other members of our own family? Why are those we are biologically the closest too sometimes the hardest to love? Why are we unwilling to forgive those who are closest to us? Freud and others have wrestled with the problem and I will not attempt to add anything to their views but rather remind all that charity truly does begin at home and with our family. So, forgive and forget the petty sleights and even the not so petty sleights we have all suffered. (And, hopefully the family members we have offended will forgive us for the petty and not so petty sleights we have inflicted on them.)

As you pause during your hectic day for your daily examination of conscience please take the time to remind yourself what Jesus said in Matthew, "that whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment," "whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna," and "if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother."

Don't let your family be a divided family; forgive and reconcile. I can't think of a better way to start the summer.

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