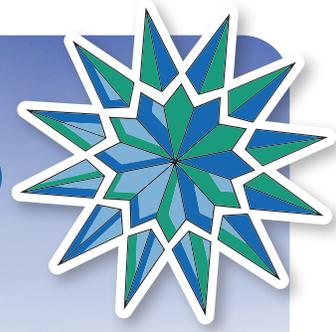


ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples

**October 4 & October 5, 2025;
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Father Eric's Homily

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10

BEYOND DESIRE FOR APPRECIATION AND MERE SENSE OF DUTY

Do we render our service for recognition, appreciation and praise or we render it out of sense of duty and rightness? Jesus, in today's Gospel teaches us not to expect gratitude for doing our duty.

To understand Jesus' illustration better we must look at it not from modern day context but from the context of his time. He says: "Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'?"

When someone returns home tired after plowing the field or tending animals, the natural thing expected is for the person to get a good bath, cold drink and hot meal. That is not the case with the servant in Jesus' story. The servant's field work was done but his work had not finished for the day. After plowing the field or tending the sheep, he had to also attend to indoor duties. He had to prepare meal for the master and wait on him while his master eats. This was not an undue burden placed on the servant. It was something expected of him. He was at his master's beck and call and had to work 24/7, so to speak.

Jesus indicates that the master is not bound to be grateful to the servant for doing what he was commanded, and underlines that it must be same for us. After doing what we have been commanded to do, we must say that "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do."

The story makes us understand that the Christian is on duty 24/7. Our duty is to serve God always. All our strength and time must be used to serve God because we belong to him, just as a slave belongs to his master and is expected to always do his bidding.

By this story Jesus also seeks to make it clear to us that we can never put God in our debt and can never have any claim on him. As such, we must be humble whenever we do anything in the service of Christ, and not imagine that we can claim it as a debt. Jesus wants us not to expect appreciation and recognition after doing our duty. It is good to be appreciated. It gives one the motivation to do more and give out his/her best.

However, as Christians, we must not let appreciation or lack of it determine the service we render to God and his people. When we mature in Christian life, we come to realize that the absence of human recognition and appreciation does not in any way affect our service and productivity in God's vineyard. A mature Christian always does his/her duties effectively and efficiently, with or without human praise, knowing that that is what God expects from him/her.

As Christians, we must even go beyond mere obligation/duty, and do things out of love for God and humanity. We must do the right thing because it is right and important to do so, and not just because it is our duty. In this regard, I put forth this question: Do we attend weekend Masses because we see it as an obligation or we consider it as something good and right to do? As we grow in our Christian life, we realize that things must be done not just out of sheer sense of duty or obligation but also out of sense of love, rightness and importance. Today, being Respect Life Sunday, I would like to conclude my reflection with some words on the topic. The message of this year Respect Life Month is: "Life: Our Sign of Hope". This message reflects the ongoing Jubilee Year of Hope. Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas, chairman of the USCCB committee on Pro-Life Activities, in his Respect Life Month statement writes:

"The life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of our hope. Through Christ, our sins are forgiven, death is overcome, and life is victorious. Yet, the daily headlines remind us of how desperately our world is thirsting for the hope that only God can provide. Every day we witness the overwhelming disregard for human life: through rising rates of abortion and assisted suicide; the killing of innocent school children, even at prayer; the mistreatment of our immigrant sisters and brothers as they endure an environment of aggression; and political and ideological violence inflicted against unsuspecting victims. These attacks threaten life precisely when it is most vulnerable and in need of protection.

Despite these realities, the gift of human life exists as a sign of hope to our world today, defying the powers of darkness and the culture of death. It is of the utmost importance that we work to ensure that every life, in every stage and circumstance, is protected in law."

In the respect life reflection, it is stated: "We are called to be signs of hope to all people, especially those whose goodness, value, and dignity are undermined. ... We have been entrusted with a message of hope for the woman who finds herself unexpectedly pregnant or for the man diagnosed with a terminal illness. At these challenging moments, we must bring God's presence, witnessing to His love, and inspiring a renewal of hope in those whose hearts are burdened. For 'hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross.'"

