

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, June 26, 2022

Living the Gospel in a Secular World

Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Luke 9:51-62



How do I fit the practice of my faith into the demands of everyday life?

Putting our faith into action is the challenge of every believer. We are pulled between making time for prayer and good works on the one hand and raising a family and holding down a job on the other. It is difficult to pray the rosary or study the Bible when supper needs to be prepared, the kids need a ride to soccer practice or when we have to work overtime on a project. It is difficult to keep our minds focused on the kingdom of God when so many other demands are made on our time and energy.

Nonetheless, Jesus calls us to love him no matter what the circumstances of our life may be. We are to give ourselves totally in his service whether we are a priest or parking lot attendant, nun, or nurse.

This Sunday's readings give us some important clues on how to balance the practice of our faith with the demands of life in the 21st century.

In the second reading, Saint Paul reminds us to "serve one another through love." Love is the calling of every Christian. It makes everything we do pleasing to God. By adding a little love, we can take whatever we're doing and make it an opportunity to serve Jesus. When we offer our

thoughts, words, and actions up to God in love, then the demands of job and family no longer get in the way of our life of faith, but actually help us to grow closer to God and others. They become opportunities for prayer as we draw on the power of his Spirit to enable us to love as he does.

The gospel reading gives us another clue. Jesus tells one of the men who wishes to follow him, "The Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." Jesus had no permanent place in this world. It is a reminder to us that we have no permanent home here either. Our final destination is heaven. We are not meant to get too comfortable here on earth. Whether we have been blessed with abundance or are struggling to get by, our homes and possessions are not ours to keep. Remembering that helps keep our work in perspective. We are called to something greater than the status and prestige that money promises.

Finally, we must be always ready to serve the needy around us. In today's gospel, two of the people who approach Jesus have excuses for not following him. But Jesus did not have time to wait around for them. It was "now or never." How many times have we used the demands of family life or of our job as an excuse not to practice charity? Jesus tells us very plainly that when we fail to feed the hungry or give drink to the thirsty, it is really him whom we are ignoring. Are our heads buried so deeply in the details of our everyday lives that we miss Jesus when he passes by? If we are to become holy in the 21st century we must not let our busy schedules be an excuse for not doing good.

We do not have to give up on the hope of becoming saints because we have jobs and families. By offering our work up to God in love, by not valuing the accumulation of wealth too highly and by not allowing our busy lives to be an excuse to overlook the needs of others, we can discover a sure path to holiness in our everyday lives.

PRAYER

Glorious Saint Joseph,
Model of all those devoted to labor,
Obtain for me the grace to work in a spirit of penance
For the expiation of my many sins,
To work conscientiously,
Putting the call of duty above my inclinations,
To work with gratitude and joy,
Considering it an honor to employ and develop,
By means of labor, the gifts received from God,
To work with order, peace, moderation, and patience,
Without ever recoiling before weariness or difficulties,
To work, above all, with purity of intention,
And with detachment from self,
Having always death before my eyes
And the account which I must render of time lost,
Of talents wasted, of good omitted
Of vain complacency in success,
So fatal to the work of God.
All for Jesus, all for Mary, all after your example,
O Patriarch Joseph.
Such shall be my watchword in life and in death.
Amen

Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.