

October 1, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ez 18:25-28 | Phil 2:1-11 | Mt 21:28-32

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

I used to be something of a sugar fiend. So much so that one birthday, my then boyfriend (now husband) decided to forego flowers and bought me a jumbo-sized bag of Smarties candies instead. While I loved sugar, I eventually decided I didn't love how it made me feel. Now older and wiser, I reach for vegetables more often. It's not that I crave carrots, but I feel better eating healthy foods. It's what God intends for my body. Similarly, God intends for our souls to follow the laws he has ordained. But sometimes life gets tough and we suffer terrible wrongs or are grieving, and we feel like the Israelites in today's first reading, calling out, "The Lord's way is not fair!" Well, thank God for that! How lost would we be, if God treated us "fairly." Instead, he treats us with love and mercy; with justice. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross," *for us*. If there is any encouragement in Christ, as Paul says, and we know there is, then being of the same mind and heart - attitude - of Christ, gets us through those moments of "unfair!" And we can follow Christ's commands, knowing he loves us more than anyone else could love us, and more than we can ever love him.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

It's easy to talk a good game as Christians. We can all agree that it is right to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned and bury the dead, as the Corporal Works of Mercy instruct us. But when it comes to actually doing those things - "**humbly regard[ing] others as more important than [ourselves], each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others**" - we can find all sorts of reasons not to. Maybe our days are too busy or maybe we feel just the tiniest bit resentful at the idea of sharing something we've worked hard to earn. However, our words don't mean much without action. Jesus says as much in today's Gospel. If we are like the son who says yes but then does not go to work in the vineyard, we are not doing our Father's will. We are like the chief priests who are being bypassed on the way to heaven by "tax collectors and prostitutes" who heard the word of God and believed.

PRAY This week, let us look for ways to live out our faith. Rather than pray only with our words, let us pray with our actions. If you aren't sure where to start, pay special consideration to the verses from the second reading, highlighted above: "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vain-glory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others."

