

18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sunday  
August 1, 2021  
“Doing the Work of God”

Ex 16:2...15  
Eph 4:17...24  
Jn 6:24-38

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Most human beings would prefer to work as little as possible. Certainly, they would want to maximize the results of the energy that they do expend. Millions have to work extremely hard in order to just survive and provide what is needed for themselves and their families. Nevertheless, there are too many others who will do the very least they can, when they can and should do far more. The pandemic brought this into clear relief. Many people, like doctors, nurses, and those in food service, sacrificed themselves for the rest of us.

However, as things improved, millions of the unemployed chose not to return to work. They could make more money by remaining unemployed because of government “handouts”. They did this, not caring for the struggling businesses that, formerly, employed them. Moreover, they had no concern for the resulting inflation and the national debt under which their children and grandchildren will suffer someday.

The scriptures for today show us how resistant we are to work hard and “pay the price” for anything worthwhile.

The Chosen People were enslaved in Egypt for decades. But God intervened and directed Moses to lead them to freedom. However, things became extremely difficult in the Sinai Desert. They began to experience hardship. Food and water were in short supply everywhere. So, they complained. They complained against Moses and against God. They believed they were better off in Egypt – at least they always had enough to eat!

Unfortunately, they did not have faith. Nor, did they really believe and trust that the Lord God would provide for them. They forgot all the wonders the Lord had done to save them and deliver them, thus far.

Nevertheless, God provided manna and quail in abundance. But to test them, God directed that they not be greedy. They should take only what they would need for the day.

Sadly, the desert wanderers did not understand that all good and great things come at a price. They did not want to accept that their freedom would entail a new kind of work and a different kind of suffering.

In the Gospel selection we have a, somewhat, similar scenario. The crowd sought Jesus, because the day before, he had fed thousands with only a few bread rolls and fish. So, Jesus tells them that they didn't really care about what he had been teaching – and the sick he had cured. They had come for bread – They came to be fed once again.

Instead, they should begin to listen to Jesus. They should learn from what he taught them. Because what they really needed was bread – food – for their souls and spirits. Moreover, this bread, this spiritual food, would require hard work. They would have to do the work of God which was to believe in Jesus – to have a relationship of faith and trust in him.

However, the people were hesitant. In order to believe in Jesus, they wanted some sign. It didn't matter that they were given an extraordinary sign the day before. No! Instead, they challenged Jesus to do what Moses had done, everyday, in the desert!

So, Jesus corrected them again and told them that God, and not Moses, provided for them long ago – And that he, Jesus himself, was empowered to provide them with a new, a heavenly, bread. Moreover, this bread would enable them to live forever! Nevertheless, they still did not understand that this would be bread for their souls and spirits.

Then Jesus put it to them very plainly. He was the bread of life – actually the bread of eternal life. Anyone who truly came to him with belief and trust would never hunger or thirst again! Because Jesus would provide what their souls and spirits so desperately needed!

Brothers and Sisters, how sadly and easily we forget all that God has done for us in the past – How frequently we fail to live with deep faith and trust in Jesus! Yes, we come to Church; we say our prayers – but we fail to trust and live in Jesus – and we fail to embrace the hard work that his Gospel demands.

There still are sins we fail to overcome. There still are attachments we don't want to give up – All because spiritual growth is hard work – and because we would prefer an easier way. Sadly, too, we even, sometimes, compare ourselves to others whom we can know hardly at all. Often, we conclude that they have it easier and are better off – or we judge them and think we are better than they are!

The truth is that we all need improvement – We each have a unique call from God – We each have a special work that we must accomplish – And this work can be done only by walking through life with faith and trust in Jesus.

So, let us pray, today, that we continue to strive in faith to be all that God asks of us!

Amen.

August 1, 2021

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