

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time – 11-13-2022

“If anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.”

Unless of course someone has a very serious reason, I can't imagine there are too many people who would disagree with Saint Paul from the second reading today.

Perhaps some pie-in-the-sky politicians or out of touch Marxist/communists from days past may have other ideas but ordinary people know better how things really work in the concrete world of the here and now.

We know we can't live off of the blood, sweat and tears of our great ancestors forever. Eventually it would all run out.

If a capable person is unwilling to work then they shouldn't get paid and consequently they ought to get a good taste of what it feels like to go hungry.

So if we get this simple principle in the natural order then why do so many people suddenly have this crazy idea that everybody just automatically goes to heaven in the supernatural order after they die?

If sacrifice and hard work are necessary for a full stomach and a somewhat comfortable life in this world then doesn't it stand to reason that sacrifice and hard work are somehow necessary to gain happiness in the next life as well?

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying we can earn heaven. Strictly speaking that would be impossible. Jesus alone was capable of accomplishing that work of sacrifice for us on the cross.

However, we must be willing to work with him every day to say no to the lies that the world is pushing on us – lies that we may very well have knowingly or even unknowingly adopted in our own lives.

We must willingly sacrifice our own will to the Will of God when the ways of the world conflict with the ways of God.

This requires hard work and a lot humility on our part because Sacred Scripture tells us in the first reading that, "the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire..."

To sacrifice our will to God's Will entails hard work and by all means great sacrifice. Nobody ever said it was going to be easy. But just because it isn't easy doesn't mean it's impossible.

We can never give up. Jesus is very capable of making what is bitter quite sweet if we let him.

Jesus warned the Jews in the gospel today that the temple would be thrown down – not a stone left upon another stone – and it happened.

Jesus is warning us in the gospel today that there will be wars and insurrections. He warned that "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky" and therefore it will happen, if it isn't happening already.

He also warned us that many would come in his name to deceive us.

So my warning to everyone here today is, if you hear anyone teaching anything contrary to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church on faith or morals, do not follow them, no matter who they are or what rank they may have in the world or even in the Church.

If any one of us gets into heaven, ultimately it won't be because we were so good it will be because God is so good. But that doesn't mean that what we do in this life is pointless.

We must be humble, work hard and sacrifice much. In other words, work like it all depends upon us while all the while acknowledging that it all depends upon God.

"If anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat."

Or it might be said another way. If anyone is unwilling to humbly work and sacrifice for their salvation, then perhaps, neither will that one be saved.