

VI TRINITY 2018

SERMON-SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

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Jesus gives a “Happy Talk”...not “happy clappy”...but what it means to be truly happy doing God’s work.

Our Gospel Lesson is from the Sermon on the Mount. It follows the Beatitudes...a word that simply means...Blessings...and Happiness.

Jesus tells us we are happy when we show mercy to others; the same kind of mercy God shows us. He goes on to say we are like a light for the whole world to see...our light must shine before all people...so they will see the good things we do...and praise our Father in heaven.

When it comes to doing what is good and right and pleasing to God...Jesus told his 1st Century audience their faith had to exceed what the religious experts were doing. Jesus then gives a lesson in anger...redefining what the Sixth Commandment explicitly teaches us...“Do not commit murder”.

First century Judaism taught murder excluded everything but the intentional taking of another human life. Jesus took the Sixth Commandment and applied it on a broader level...to include anger and hatred...the seeds of murder. Left unchecked anger can quickly lead to hate. Hatred can cause someone to lose control and murder. Hatred is the opposite of love...we are supposed to love...not hate.

Jesus never said we shouldn’t get angry. Jesus knew human nature and he knew very well what human beings are capable of doing. He does say there is no excuse at all for being angry with someone without a good reason. Sometimes we like to get angry at someone for no particular reason. If we don’t ask God for his help in getting rid of that anger, it will soon rule, and then ruin our lives.

When we are angry with another person without a cause, or call him a bad name, or insult him, we have murdered him in your heart. We have scratched that person out of your book of life. We have said his life isn’t worth anything to us or to God. We treat him as if he was already dead and buried. The problem with staying angry is it takes far too much effort to stay angry. It’s better to get rid of the anger...before it consumes every part of our being.

Christians are not about hate. We are about love, mercy, and compassion. There may be times in our lives when we get angry with a friend, co-worker, neighbor, family member, or even someone in church. We need to look for every opportunity to set things right before things get out of control.

We need to say we are sorry and ask for their forgiveness for the times we have hurt someone in word or action. We must also be willing to forgive them for the times we have been hurt. That is the kind of faithfulness Jesus is looking for in us, the kind of faithfulness that comes from the heart.

Jesus told his 1st Century audience...if they had something against someone...to leave their gift in front of the altar and go and make peace with that person...then come back and make your offering to God.

We have the opportunity at every Mass to do the same thing...in the General Confession. We get and invitation to:

- Tell God we are sorry for our sins,
- Renew our commitment to love others,
- Bring order back into our lives,
- Follow God’s Commandments,
- Walk in his holy ways.

If we look at the Ten Commandments as a set of rules God gave us to obey, or else he will send us to hell, we miss their purpose. The Gospel Lesson is about how we apply all of the Commandments, not just the Sixth, to our daily lives.

In the Collect we ask God to increase the love in our hearts toward him so we may receive his promises, which will surpass anything we have experienced or understand now. Part of our duty as Christians is to spread that love to others, even if we don’t particularly like them. We must love them!

Jesus said if we truly love him we must try to keep his Commandments. If we find anger is controlling our lives, now is the time to get rid of that anger...we can’t do that on our own. We need God’s special gift of his Holy Spirit to change our hearts, minds, and whole being into people motivated by pure and selfless love. Then, we will be truly happy.

And that’s not just “Happy Talk”!

