

XVII TRINITY 2019
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
ST. LUKE 14.1

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“Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi”...we learned during previous Lenten studies...is a Latin phrase that can be translated...**“as we pray, so we believe, so we live.”** We added a fourth element to this maxim...**Lex Docendi... we teach.**

We worship the way we do because we believe it reflects what we believe about our relationship with God our Father as Jesus has revealed him to us...a relationship based on God’s unconditional love for us...and Jesus’ fulfillment of his unconditional love on the cross.

As Catholic Christians we believe and teach...Word and Sacrament...Sacrament and Word...are inextricably bound together...they cannot be separated. In the same way...Liturgy (How we pray) and Theology (what we believe) are also inextricably bound together...they too cannot be separated

There is no question we love the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Anglican Missal*. We like the way we do things here at Saint Joseph Parish. However, an obsession over ceremonial in the Church must never be the primary reason we come to Mass. The Mass is God’s gift to us through his son, Jesus, and we must always approach it as such. The Mass is our direct experience of heaven on earth.

The religious experts of Jesus’ day had developed a complicated set of rules and regulations that governed what a person could and could not do on the Sabbath. They had taken the Fourth Commandment...“Keep the Sabbath Day holy”...and applied a rigid interpretation of what that meant. The Sabbath Day for Christians is not the same as Sunday...which we often call the Lord’s Day.

The Fourth Commandment says we should use the Sabbath as a “day of rest”...and God does establish some criteria as to how it should be observed. After God created everything...he took a day off...we work hard...we should take a day off too. We keep the Sabbath Day holy by recharging our physical and spiritual batteries.

Jesus often finds himself at odds with the religious experts whose re-interpretation of the Commandments made life unbearable for the people. They had taken God’s Commandments and added hundreds of man-made laws that made them look superior at the expense of others.

In the Gospel...the appearance of the man with the dropsy...a condition we call edema today...gives Jesus the opportunity to make his point about the Sabbath. He asks the religious experts if the Law allows healing on the Sabbath. If they answered yes, they would look like fools for breaking the Law they expected everyone else to observe. If they said no, they would prove what Jesus already knew...they lacked compassion. And so Jesus heals the man and sent him on his way.

Jesus then turns his attention to a lesson in humility as he watches people push each other out of the way to get the best seats at a dinner he is attending. In his short parable about the wedding feast, he suggests people exercise some humility...and common sense. Don’t take the best seat...you might be asked to move and will be humiliated...instead take another seat...you might be asked to sit closer to the host.

In fact...compassion and humility go together...they too are inseparably linked and are at the heart of today’s Gospel. The best way for us to keep the Sabbath holy is to show some kindness, compassion and humility, and not just on the Sabbath.

What we act out Liturgically here every week reinforces why we are here...to worship God in his house...as people he has called to be Church. The *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Anglican Missal* are based on Holy Scripture and used properly are effective tools drawing us closer to God.

Jesus shows us ultimate compassion and humility...primarily in his actions. **Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi, Lex Docendi**...we pray, we believe, we live, we teach...are ultimately actions...not just for the Sabbath...or Sunday but for every day of our lives.

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