

FR. MIKE RASCHKO'S HOMILY

October 1, 2017

Fr. Jack asked me to preach this weekend for two reasons

- cover while he was away
- to do some reflection about giving and why we do it
 - he was thinking of an essay I wrote a number of years ago where I compared 3 theologies of giving---he likes to use it.

I told him I would like to move in a slightly different direction, beginning with a quote from Cesar Chavez, a non-violent man (who couldn't speak himself--too weak from a fast in reparation for some violence his union was involved in during their strike in the late 60's).

When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of men (and women) we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving of our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness, is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice. To become a man (or woman) is to suffer for others. God help us to be men (and women).

This quote from Cesar Chavez is a clear echo of what Paul is trying to tell us in the second reading. There he inserts into his text an older Christian hymn that tries to catch the mind and attitude of Christ Jesus and explain the life and death of Jesus. The key word in the hymn is the Greek word "KENOSIS"

- usually translated -- *he humbled himself*
- better translation--*he placed his life at the service of others*
 - Paul is arguing that it is this attitude that leads to the glory of the resurrection
 - it is living in this manner that leads to fullness of life

Paul then makes a mistake that Christians have made down through the ages he runs immediately to Jesus death (and resurrection) as the great example of Jesus laying down his life for others. What he misses is the fact that the whole life and the whole ministry of Jesus is defined by this central attitude--placing his life at the service of others and finding life in greater abundance when he does so.

People were attracted to Jesus because they came alive around him.

- they came to him weighed down by sin->they came to life because he did not let that define them in his eyes and told them that he and the Father had already forgiven them and a different life was open to them
 - Zacchaeus: he put himself at risk with the religious authorities for acting in this way; he was crucified because he represented a God they could not believe in
 - The sick came because he welcomed them and offered them healing; the woman with the hemorrhage--unclean--put himself at risk by letting her touch him he became unclean, and unacceptable; but he did not believe God thought that way God wanted life for them both and saw them both as beautiful and lovable->and a different kind of life was opened to her
 - Social outcasts, foreigners came to him because in him they found welcome, they found community—he dined with them; again, he found himself under suspicion--if this man were of God, he would know whom he is dining with
 - Even his birth was a placing himself at the service of others; in Luke----the manger, which is a feeding trough for cows and sheep; Jesus came to feed us, his flock

St Paul introduces his hymn by telling us---*put on the mind of Christ Jesus*

- If you want to be a follower of Jesus, place your lives at the service of others
 - We already do that---parents, spouses, friends, works in the parish
- As Cesar Chavez said: *it is my deepest belief that only by giving of our lives do we find life.*

Way deep down religion is about the energy: how the energy of life flows through us

- if it all just flows in and is centered on us---that leads to death
- if it flows through us and out to others---that is the path to life

We live in a fractured world, torn by war, injustice, hatred, violence seems like there is little we can do to change it

- Robert Kennedy in S. Africa--facing racism and injustice
"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current

which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

We are asked to place our lives at the service of others—when do, we can change the world. Over the next few weeks this community will be thinking and praying a lot about money and giving.

Before you get to that level, I would ask you to think and pray about what life is for, what we are to do with it.