

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
Isaiah 55:6-9
Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18
Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a
Matthew 20:1-16a

Paul says to the Philippians, “*Christ will be magnified in my body*” and “*Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.*”

To do so begins with, as stated in our opening prayer, by keeping the precepts of the Lord. Do we live according to what Jesus teaches? This begins with keeping the Ten Commandments but not just because they are commandments.

We must live remembering what Jesus tells us the two greatest commandments are, to love God and to love our neighbor.

Loving God calls us to show our love in the way we praise God. This can be centered in what goes on at Mass. We *all* come *together* to praise God. As I have said multiple times before, we count on many people to help at Mass. We have lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers, ushers, and musicians. We are grateful for those who help us in these roles to glorify God.

But your generosity in helping our parish doesn't end there. Some of you help in other ways. We are thankful for those who help with our Martha Ministry for funeral luncheons. We are thankful for the volunteers for our rummage sale and our Rosary and Altar Society. We are thankful for our catechists who volunteer to help with our faith formation program. There are the people who make our festival possible. The list could go on. While we are thankful for those who do help, for some things, like our festival and those who count our collections as well as musicians we do need some new volunteers.

All these people "glorify the Lord by their lives." I use this specific phrase because it mirrors the dismissal formula that I generally use at the end of Mass, "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." We are to take what we receive at Mass, grace, and go out the world.

I am also aware that we have numerous parishioners who volunteers in our community from our men who lead a weekly Bible study at the Wayne County Jail to those who take Communion to the hospitals, nursing homes, and homebound. There are numerous parishioners who volunteer with groups like Catholic Charities, Habitat

for Humanity, and Laurel House. In all these our volunteers follow Jesus' commandment to love our neighbor.

You are also generous with your financial contributions. We recently raised \$4,000 in an emergency collection for the victims of Hurricane Harvey (with another collection coming for Hurricane Irma and potentially Hurricane Maria).

You responded last year with great generosity to our diocesan Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA). All this on top of your weekly giving to our regular weekly collection.

In all of this, we are "Glorifying the Lord by Our Lives."

It is time to start our CMA for this year. The theme for this year is what I have been talking about, "Glorifying the Lord by Our Lives." As we begin this year's appeal, I am happy to be able to say our goal for this year is up just \$445 (1%) while the goal for the diocese as a whole is up 3%.

So, the good news is that after you responded so generously last year, I don't have to ask for big increases this year. That doesn't mean we don't need some to contribute more. Among last year's donors are

people who have passed away or moved, or maybe their income has changed and they can't contribute as much. Increases by some who can or contributions from new donors will help offset this.

Here, I want to take the opportunity to speak about our own parish finances. Hopefully you have read our annual report that we sent out at the end of August. In the report, we told you about the \$48,000 deficit for this year. We need to receive more in the regular collections if we are to continue our ministries as they are now.

I know nobody likes to hear the priest talk about money. I don't like to talk about money but it is your parish and you need to know what is going on and what our needs are.

So, I just encourage you to think prayerfully about what you contribute to the CMA and to the parish. You will find an insert in today's bulletin as well as large posterboards in church that talk about how your CMA contributions are used. Please remember that if we don't make our CMA goal, the parish has to make up the difference. Thus, it doesn't do us any good to decrease your CMA contribution to put it in the Sunday collection.

It is your money and you are, in the spirit of the landowner in the gospel, ‘you are free to do as you wish with your own money.’ Here is what I suggest for the average parishioners. For the CMA, please contribute the same amount as last year (perhaps a little more if you can).

As to your contribution to our regular collection please pray about being able to contribute more. Going back to what I wrote in the annual report, we need about \$2/person more per week. Some will not be able to do that. Others can do more. Please give according to your means.

Thank you for giving of your time, your talent, and your treasure so that we may all be “Glorifying the Lord by Our Lives.”