

33 Sunday OT C 2016  
November 12-13  
Frazee/Callaway

I am not big into this, but occasionally I like to browse in an antique store. I particularly enjoy coming upon an old tool or machine and, without having any idea for what it was made, trying to figure out its purpose.

I stumbled upon some rosaries. The sales clerk commented, "Those are very collectable. People use them as hanging pieces or as incidental décor. As I clutched the rosary in my pocket, I responded, "I use them for prayer."

I am OK with a cream separator becoming yard art, or a restored tractor as the object of a hobbyist's passion. I am not too OK with a rosary becoming décor, or a statue used to bring ambiance. If something has been dedicated to God, it ought to remain in the service of religion. This can be said, too, of the Christian vocation.

Baptism is a dedication to God. Parents are not to dedicate a child to God one day, and then the next day live as though religion is nothing but the obsolete practices of their grandparents. And we, the baptized, cannot set aside the light of faith whenever it does not serve a personal, political or power agenda.

St. Paul reminds us that the baptized are to be a model of Christian service. We are to serve the needs of the Body of Christ, not so that we can receive something in return, but that we may contribute to the common good. We are baptized into Christ Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve. Baptism is not incidental décor for the soul, but a way of life for body and soul.

St. Paul admonishes us to remember that in our service to the Body of Christ, we cannot act like busy bodies or mind the business of others. To do so makes us vulnerable to gossip and sinful judgment. If this happens, instead of serving the Body of Christ, we end up serving ourselves. Those who serve themselves are never satisfied, they reject the grace that flows to the truly devoted and true happiness morphs into a passing delight.

For most people, the Christian vocation is lived in the Sacrament of Marriage. Marriage is the most intense form of Christian service. In good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer, each spouse seeks the good of

the other. To borrow a phrase from St Paul, "...in toil and drudgery, night and day, you work..." not for personal gain or even satisfaction, but that your family may have life and have it to the full. This is the sacrifice of the self, it is a willingness to climb up to on the cross and stay there.

It is only from the cross that we are high enough to see human destiny. We have been created for heaven! Remember: few things that the world identifies as valuable contribute to our salvation. In light of our purpose we ask for the grace of being devoted to the Lord.

Heaven. It is possible to treat heaven as an antique, as a rusty remnant of the faith of our ancestors. Heaven has always been and will always be the goal of human existence. Don't be satisfied going alone—bring your family and friends, bring the neighbor and the stranger. Heaven is our goal and the purpose of life. Will the Church say Amen?