

Corpus Christi Parish

March 18, 2021

Dear Parishioners; Last week I finished up what I was trying to say with the line; “And if all else fails, there is always the hope of Purgatory.”

I know that Purgatory has gotten a bad reputation over the years but it really is an essential component of the forgiveness process. The Protestants are right that faith is a free gift that is given to us by God that we cannot earn. But Jesus also expects us to exercise that gift of faith by; asking, seeking and knocking on the doors that will lead us to the Truth.

One of the main themes that make up the foundation of our relationship with God that we bring to the table, is the virtue of persistence. Jesus encourages us to be persistent continuously through out the Gospels. There is the parable of the widow pleading with the judge for justice; there is the woman who has lost a coin that she spends all day hunting for; and there is the woman with the hemorrhage who struggles to touch the hem of Jesus’ cloak.

We may not be responsible for the faith that we have, but we are responsible for putting that faith to good use. And Jesus works hard to get us to stop being obsessed with results. If we are result oriented, then we run the risk of giving up. Rather, we are supposed to work at putting our lives up against the Gospel everyday, and letting the Holy Spirit direct us and lead us down the path that leads to wisdom, meaning and purpose that quenches our need to succeed.

The problem with that path is that wisdom isn’t cheap. The Father could have created us with an abundance of wisdom, but instead He wants us to earn it and then own it. And for mere mortals like us, that process takes time and it often takes trial and error. Which is why we need to focus on the daily routine of being persistent rather than whether we are getting results.

People who work for justice understand that the spiritual rewards that encourage us comes from persistence and not from results. And one of the reasons that they know this to be true is because once they do have a success in their work, they don’t get too much time to enjoy it before they recognize another injustice that needs their attention. Disciples know

this too, that just as we take the edge off of one failing, we discover some other character flaw that we could be working on.

And I know that some of you are wondering when am I going to get to the question of Purgatory. I often say about my Dad that when he died and went to his reward, if he found out that there was no such thing as purgatory, he would have been disappointed.

The reason I say that is because as my Dad got to the other side of his mid-life crisis, he began to see the world much more with empathy and compassion. And he made direct efforts to reach out to those old friends and acquaintances whom he felt that he had disappointed over the years, in order to bring some healing and peace into their lives.

For my Dad, rather than being a place of punishment, Purgatory was an opportunity to make amends. God knows that if we are going to develop the virtue of persistence then we are going to have to be encouraged along the way. And my Dad found grace and hope and healing by wanting to smooth out the old paths.

Unfortunately, not everyone was happy to hear from him, which is why my Dad had to be committed to being persistent, and it is why God the Father had to encourage Dad with the consolations of faith.

And one of the consolations for my Dad was that the healing and forgiving process will continue beyond this life. So if we have regrets or if some of our relationships have soured and we would like a “do-over”, then we should take heart because if our persistence doesn’t pan out in this life, we have the next life to keep to the work, trusting that with Jesus’ grace and our persistence, Jesus is able to make all things new.

I found the following prayer that asks for the grace we need for this day; *Dear Lord, when I’m fighting against darkness and confusion so often these days, strengthen my will so that I may persevere in following You and doing Your will. Help me to nurture the spirit of hope and peace, so that I may keep my thoughts and emotions on an even keel, confident that You are there and will see me through whatever choppy waters or even storms that may lie ahead. Amen.*

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever. Pat Monette/Pastor