

Homily
Monday of the 31st Week in OT
November 6, 2023

My best friend and I often alternate picking up each other's checks when we go out to dinner, usually reminding the other, "I got last time; this one's on you." There is no long-term benefit to either one of us since it all works out even over the course of time.

When I was in college, a dear friend and mentor who was a senior when I was a freshman, often paid for my meals, telling me, "I'll get this now; you pick up the tab later for someone else when you can." This was my first experience of "paying it forward."

A friend of a friend said of the priesthood, "The pay is lousy, but the retirement benefits are out of this world." The same can be said of those who invite dinner guests who can't repay them.

That's a big picture view of our life on earth. We are in the world but we are not of the world. We are pilgrims destined for a better place, a place prepared for us by our loving and merciful Father.

Every day on this earth is a struggle to survive. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs indicates we first need food, water, rest, warmth. The next level includes security and safety. Most of us have these basic needs met. Once we have the basics, we can move on to the interpersonal needs; intimacy, friendship, feelings of accomplishment. Again, most of us have these needs met, for the most part. And finally, we reach self-fulfillment, achieving our full potential.

God loves us so much that He made us in His image; we are a reflection of Him; His love, His power, His knowledge, however small a reflection that may be. These are the gifts He has given each of us, in the measure specific for each of us, gifts we are meant to use, to cultivate, to sharpen, and mostly to share. Just as God has given us everything we have and we are, we are called to share what we have and what we are for the benefit of our brothers and sisters.

We are called to share ourselves fully, completely and unselfishly. We are called to be one with each other in the family of God, members of one body with Christ as our head. We are called to store up treasures in heaven, as our eternal reward.

When we receive recompense for our actions in the here and now, what more can be said? We have received our reward. What happens when we receive all our reward now? What happens if our treasures are stored on earth?

This is our struggle; this is our task; this is our calling – to share fully and completely of ourselves, expecting nothing in return, joyfully giving selflessly. This is what God did for us two thousand years ago. Jesus gave Himself fully, completely, joyfully, lovingly, perfectly. He did this for us out of love. And we follow His example so that one day we can hear those beautiful words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."