

Homily
Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker
May 1, 2024

In all things, give thanks. Be grateful for all the blessings in our lives, good and bad. We are who we are because of everything that has happened to us up to this point in our lives, good and bad. And who we will become is because of everything that will happen to us up to that point, good and bad. Richard Bach said, “There’s no disaster that can’t become a blessing, and no blessing that can’t become a disaster.”

Once there was a poor old man who lived in a tiny village. Yet he was envied by all, for he owned a beautiful white horse. People offered fabulous prices for the steed, but the old man always refused.

One morning he found that the horse was not in his stable. All the village came to see him. “You old fool,” they scoffed, “we told you that someone would steal your horse. It would have been better to have sold him. Now the horse is gone and you’ve been cursed with misfortune.” The old man responded, “Don’t speak too quickly. Say only that the horse is not in the stable. That is all we know; the rest is judgment. If I’ve been cursed or not, how can you know? How can you judge?”

The people of the village laughed. They thought that the man was crazy. Then after fifteen days, the horse returned. Not only had he returned, he had brought a dozen wild horses with him. Once again, the village people gathered and spoke. “Old man, you were right and we were wrong. What we thought was a curse was a blessing. Please forgive us.”

The man responded, “Once again, you go too far. Say only that the horse is back. State only that a dozen horses returned with him, but don’t judge. How do you know if this is a blessing or not? You see only a fragment. Unless you know the whole story, how can you judge? You read only one page of a book. Can you judge the whole book? You read only one word of one phrase. Can you understand the entire phrase?”

This story goes back and forth with apparent curse and blessing and curse and blessing. Isn’t that like life? We never know when that catastrophe won’t end up as a blessing or when what seems to be a miracle won’t be a curse. God sees all. God has a plan. God is good and we are to give Him thanks in all things, because we don’t know how things will turn out. We put our trust in God.

Today is the Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker. Joseph trusted in God. Imagine what it was like for Joseph. Scandal. Fear. Rejection. But he put all that aside and trusted in God. He took on his role as husband to the perfect creature, Mary, and foster father to the God-made-Man, Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Joseph trusted and gave thanks in all things.

Paul tells us to, “put on love.” And that, “you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance.” Trust in God. In Him all things come together for those who trust in Him. And He has prepared a place for us, if we will only listen, follow His Son, love one another, and trust.