

Homily
Monday of the 29th Week in Ordinary Time
October 21, 2024

We are all creatures of habit. Nearly everything we do, say or think comes from habit. A habit is formed through a combination of learning, repetition and reinforcement. It takes anywhere from three weeks to three months, depending on the complexity of the activity, to develop a habit. It also takes that much time to remove a habit by replacing it with a new one. A habit is formed as a neuropathway in our brain. Think of it as a physical path through an open field of grass. You take a certain path through the grass enough times and the grass eventually is tramped down leaving a dirt path. Robert Frost wrote, "The Road Not Taken," in reference to how easy it is to take the beaten or well-worn path, and how difficult it is to take a less traveled way. This is why it is so challenging to break an old habit and form a new one.

The first reading tells us how we are dead in our sinfulness and it is because of God's gift of grace we are saved in our faith. The Response from today's Psalm reminds us that we belong to God; that He made us and we are His. The Gospel Acclamation states, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Matt 5:3. Jesus, in today's Gospel, says, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." Luke 12:15. God gives us everything we need to have life eternal; it is through our selfishness, our greediness, that we choose death over life, that we make decisions based on our passions instead of love. It is in love that we are truly free, free from bad habits, free from bad choices, free to look outside ourselves and be Christ for one another.

The choice is ours; it takes courage, strength and humility to make the right choices. It takes courage, strength and humility to forgo old, bad habits that tear down the Body of Christ and form new, loving habits that build up the kingdom of God and stores up treasure in heaven.

Grace is God's gift to us. Faith is the choice we make from that gift. God made us from His love to love Him and each other. It takes humility to be poor in spirit, to recognize and acknowledge our good and bad habits. And it takes courage and strength to trample down the grass to form new, good habits and ignore those old, bad habits. And we are not alone in this effort; through our Baptism, we are members of the family of God, the Body of Christ, the Church militant, suffering and triumphant, to pray for us and we for them. And God has given us everything we need through His Son in the Sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, to heal and strengthen us. Jesus gave us His Mother who is the Mother of all Grace. The choice is ours.