

HOMILY – 13TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – 1 JULY 2018

Theme – “To Take the Trouble To Do Well”

At the Gala Day yesterday, in Winchburgh, one of Queen Emma’s, newly crowned, Royal Court, a wee girl recited a beautiful poem, composed by herself, without any piece of paper, word for word. It was really outstanding. She was minded to take the trouble to do this and it was beautiful to behold.

As St Paul says to the people of Corinth, “We expect you to put the most into this work of mercy”. He was addressing a community that had become, prior to a poor harvest, indolent, lazy and self-indulgent with food, drink and social pleasures. In other words, “they couldn’t be bothered giving of their best”. St Therese of Lisieux, wrote in her diary, *The Little Way*, in the 1890s, “no matter how trivial, mundane or humble our work, there is something beautiful and honourable to God in what is done thoughtfully, thoroughly and well”.

When we think we are too important for a task, something in us dies, for, in Faith, nothing is too lowly for us to do. Humble, simple tasks have a spiritual capacity to redress the balance of too important to do, simple things. Recently, when the Master General of the Dominican Order stood down from office, after 10 years in Rome, responsible for 15,000 clergy, he was posted to a Dominican House in Milan. The second evening after his arrival, he was delegated to go down to the kitchen and peel the potatoes for supper, which he did with a willing spirit.

I hear that strawberries and raspberries are rotting in the fields of Lincolnshire because many local young people believe that picking fruit, to earn some pocket money, is too tiring and beneath their dignity.

Jesus, in the Gospel, shows the world, that for the Son of God, no task is beneath being done well, hence, the night before He died, washing the feet of the Twelve. Reminding them that the way to the Kingdom is through serving rather than being served. In today’s Gospel, Jesus is rushed off His feet but He takes it all in His stride. He never focuses attention on Himself, never seeks self-pity, never complains, never turns anyone away. He never uses that over used word, “Stress”. It is curious but I believe very true, that whatever our work in life may be, if we enter into it through prayer then our capacity to cope is so much better.

St Benedict composed the mantra or invocation to His Rule of Life, “Through Prayer to Work”. In other words, always start your day with prayer time, then God enriches your work and the fruits are much better.

It is wrong to say, ‘to work is to pray’, that’s a copout, rather it is through prayer to work. So, the fruit of Jesus’s prayer life to the Father, is that He is acutely aware of who needs His loving help and when they are in touch with Him. Similarly, God gives us, through prayer, in the Holy Spirit, the wisdom and direction of who needs our help, where our work is needed most and the spiritual strength to carry it out.

How many of us have had the presence of mind, like the characters in today’s Gospel, to seek the help of God, when we are in trouble, rather than doing everything on our own, then wondering, why we can’t survive? Jesus reminds us, through our Baptism, that we have entered a covenant of love, a bond of truth, faith and service. That to build the Kingdom of God on earth, we must go to whenever God is

teaching us and carry out the work, no matter how ordinary, to the best of our ability. As Our Lady reminds us, the humble will be raised up and the mighty laid low.

God Bless you All.

Have a good holiday.