

## HOMILY SUNDAY 25-B (Homily 03)

“Be Countercultural like Jesus”

(Wisdom 2:12, 17-20; Psalm 54; James 3:16 – 4:3; Mk 9:30-37)

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Do you want to be happy and live a good life?

Be counter-cultural like Jesus: accept some suffering; seek to serve and be humble.

This life choice will automatically bring us some sacrifice and suffering. All too often, the mentality of the world that surrounds us is to avoid suffering at all cost; to be selfish and self-centered, and to be proud, seeing others as less than ourselves.

An example of the world’s take on life can be an article on Madonna, who was quoted as using her sex appeal to make lots of money which then brings her power and prestige. Along the same line, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous speaks of the three temptations of money, fame and power.

The message of the Gospel today is just the opposite. Jesus teaches us to take up our cross; to serve others; to be childlike and humble. His own disciples had a difficult time understanding this teaching. Even after he predicted that the Son of Man would be persecuted, tortured and put to death, they were caught up in the game of one-upmanship – of wanting places of privilege and power when his kingdom would come about.

The first reading from the Book of Wisdom succinctly describes the all too familiar lot of the righteous person whose honesty and fairness gets him or her into trouble with persons who are less honest and upright. Examples abound. One is in the movie *Big* where the main character starts his first day on the job and is chastised immediately by a fellow worker for working too fast and thus posing a threat to the others by exposing their lack of diligence doing the same job.

Returning to the example of Alcoholics Anonymous, the motto held up to its members is threefold: Recovery, Unity and Service. All three are interlocking. Recovery happens best through group unity, and is maintained best by a life of selfless service to other struggling alcoholics. That secret is also the secret of the gospel.

Saint Andre Bissette of Montreal is an example of someone who truly lived out a life of humble service. Refused at first by the Church as a seminarian due to his frail health, he was accepted by the Holy Cross Congregation and given the humble ministry of hospitality as a porter. His devotion to St. Joseph the worker permeated his ministry as he began to greet people and got involved in their lives. Soon he was praying for and with them, anointing them with oil, and miracles of healing started to happen. When he died as an old man, a million people attended his funeral. He was recently declared a saint for the universal church. His life is an inspiration for us all to live lives of selfless service.

The Eucharist we celebrate now makes present the redemptive love of Jesus who suffered for us; who came to serve, not to be served, and who lived a life of childlike honesty and simplicity. Through Word and Sacrament, we are transformed into his Body, His people, and sent out to serve the world.

So, to be happy and live a good, full life, be counter-cultural like Jesus. Be open to a little suffering; seek to serve one another, be childlike, and the kingdom of God will be ours.

