

Homily 26 Sunday Ordinary Time Year A

“Every saint has a past, every sinner has a future”

In civil society and at work our mistakes can be very costly, especially to our reputation. When the higher ups meet and discuss who they might choose it only takes a brief comment – ‘there’s a bit of a cloud hovering over that one’, ‘I think there was some trouble in the past’ – and that person is then overlooked and somebody else appointed instead. Or the people and culture manager will conduct a social media search – see a few headlines or Wikipedia criticisms – and then never extend a job offer.

With God this is not so. Even when we offend Him He is not ashamed to call us His son or daughter. He gives us time to think over our bad reactions and repent. He also leaves us free to abuse his confidence and fail to follow through on what we said we would do. A terrible fate if we were to truly abandon the family. But that would be our call not His. At any rate, we are always his child. He does not cast us out. He welcomes us back always. That’s why the tax collectors and prostitutes could entertain the possibility of repentance and not only return to the father’s house, but enter into fruitful labour in the vineyard.

God our Father asks us to trust Him and be obedient just like Jesus. The apostles followed Jesus in an on again off again way but with the exception of Judas they persevered to the end. Some of them even went to strange and faraway cities to bring people of different languages the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Sometimes our preaching of the good news is made with our very presence as people of faith.

At a previous Eucharistic procession a protestor at Hyde park asked a policeman who all these people were singing hymns and praying the rosary. What were they protesting? He replied, 'they're marching for Jesus'. She was left quite perplexed.

People of faith who walk joyfully through the streets of our city. People who are sinners that love Jesus and get up again when they fall over.

At Mass we say that Jesus is our Blessed Hope. When we despair of being good disciples it is because we have allowed the enemy of our souls to get to us. Jesus gives himself to us in his very body. A free gift. Not merited. Not because we have been good. He died for us when we were sinners. So that we might be healed and lifted up. Converted.

Of course we need to go to confession if we have gravely sinned. But our everyday falls, our weaknesses, our feelings of shame for past wrongs that we are sorry for, are no obstacle to being sons and daughters of God in Jesus Christ.