

From the Desk Of Fr. John

The Life Chain...called all of us to be more responsive to the issue of 'respect for life.'

We just go our own way and forget that we can make a difference. We can stand up for life! The issue of devastation in the Caribbean forced us to take a more careful look at what was happening there after the hurricanes that devastated the territory. We can look again at these important issues of life right here and make the choice to help promote respect for life and make a difference. Thank you to those who stood in the 'Life Chain' and all who prayed for a deeper respect for life!

Parents realize that they can help their children to learn respect and take on responsibility for the good of the family and for the good of their future adult lives. Jesus helps us to see the result of our behavior...good or not so good...and begins to move us in a right direction. We are called to action...just as the father in Jesus' story asks his two sons to work in the vineyard. We can ignore the call to action or have a change of heart and become involved...and undergo that change of heart.

The work of the Kingdom is so crucial and important...can we just skip our responsibility to live our faith and share it with others? Jesus tried to make the point that the testimony of John...changed many lives. Jesus also drew the attention of His listeners to those who did undergo life changes. Jesus wanted the religious leaders to be moved by the new behavior and interior conversion that took place in those who really listened to John. They were witnessing to the real advent of the Kingdom...their witness should have had a deep impact on his audience and moved them to change. Jesus wants us to see that the witness of our life can have a real effect...it can change the lives of others...but we have to face reality and make the choices that will move us to grow.

The next parable of Jesus is another action story. It is about a vineyard...(we have so many wineries springing up all over the place)...and the work it takes to keep it up and make it productive. The story puts us in the picture by having us determine what the servants/tenants

have or have not done. So the lesson is about the action of the servants/stewards...appropriate or not.

The lesson Jesus teaches is about the inappropriate actions of those who were given the responsibility of caring for the land and returning the appropriate portion of the produce to the real owner. It is about the final judgement, or what we call the 'end time,' and how must give an account of our lives and behavior. We are simply stewards...it does not belong to us...we are given charge of it and we will have to return it at the end.

We can see through the parable that our behavior and attitudes can take on the false sense that we are in charge...that we are God. But the story tries to help us examine our lives to see if we are truly being 'good stewards,' or selfish and greedy, with all that God has entrusted to us. We are to grow as disciples and fully be disciples. We are to see our time here on earth as a mission entrusted to us. In gratitude, we recognize and receive these gifts from the Lord...all of them...everything. In addition, we are called to share them in love of God and others.

How do we carry out our mission...living our faith life...and leading others to know, love and serve God? This past week we celebrated the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. He grew up as a rather rich and spoiled young man. When he encountered the Lord in prayer, a deep conversion began in his life. He had come to realize the depth of God's love and mercy for him...and he wanted everyone to know and live in response to that love. We are familiar with the hymn attributed to him... 'Make me a channel of your peace.' May all of us be caught up in that love of God and others.

Pet Blessing...takes place near the feast of St. Francis...for us that was on Friday afternoon Oct. 6. May the Lord help us be grateful for all of his creation and work to protect and preserve it as good stewards.