

Homily 16th Sunday - Year A - 2020

In the parables about sowing seeds that bear fruit, we discover that the true fulfilment of life can only be found with God. Leo Tolstoy tells the story about a king who believed that the answer to three questions would provide him with the wisdom he needed to avoid failure and enable him to live a good and successful life:

- When is the best time to do each thing?
- Who are the most important people to work with?
- And what is the most important thing to do at all times?

Subjects from all over the kingdom tried to answer the king's questions but were unable to satisfy him so he decided to consult a wise old hermit with the hope that the old man would enlighten him. When the king arrived near the hermit's place high up in the mountains, he dressed himself in ordinary clothes and walked towards the hut to find the hermit working laboriously on his garden. The king immediately asked the hermit his three questions but did not receive an answer. The king offered to help the hermit dig his garden and after some time, he asked his three questions again. Before the hermit could answer, a man emerged from the woods bleeding from a terrible stomach wound. Immediately, the king ran to help him, and work hard to wash and dress his wound. As darkness was fast approaching, they all spent the night in the hermit's hut.

The next morning, the wounded man was doing better, but was incredulous at the help he had received from the king. He confessed that he recognized the king, and revealed that he had come to kill him to exact revenge because the king had executed his brother and seized his property. He had been wounded by the King's soldiers on his way up the mountain. However, the man now praised and thanked the king for saving his life, asked for his forgiveness, and promised to become his faithful servant. The King was delighted to make friends with an enemy and agreed to return the lands to him. Then, for the last time, the king asked the hermit his three questions, but the old man replied that they had already been answered. **The king** came to realise that the solution to his questions lay in his everyday actions towards his neighbour.

The answers are simple: the most important time is the present because it is the only time over which we have power; the most important person is whoever we are with at the time and the most important thing to do is to do good to the person in front of you.

The fulfilment of life lies in serving others and, in forsaking self-interest, to bring joy to those around us at that moment. This is the path we must take; the path that Jesus took. It will meet all our mental, spiritual and emotional needs and ensure that we live a good life - the life of a disciple of Jesus. In forgetting yourself and serving others you will find that, without seeking it, you will reap the fulness of life and be happy. **It's all about opening our eyes** to reality and focusing on treating those around us as we would like to be treated. The satisfaction triggered by acts of kindness is always greater than the satisfaction received from other activities. **Even though** it can sometimes be a thankless job, it remains a reward in itself. We must, therefore, live in the present and treat everyone with love, respect and dignity. *"Be not the maker of plans and promises, but rather be the one who offers faithful service in small matters. This is the person most likely to achieve what is good and lasting."* – J W Von Goethe.

Final Thought On the first day of school, the teacher asked a student, "What are your parents' names?" The student replied, "My father's name is Laughing and my mother's name

is Smiling." The teacher said, "Are you kidding?" The student said, "No, Kidding is my brother. I am Joking."