

## Homily 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year A 2023

A phrase we often use is “*Actions speak louder than words.*” St James writes a letter to the Church about this very issue and Jesus underlines the importance of this piece of wisdom. The word *integrity* is also raised in the making of choices since this helps us make good and wise choices. Talking to youngsters about this will inevitably lead to one of them asking the question *Why?*

Last week's story about the Vineyard owner and the wage he offered the workers suggests making choices for what we can get out of it is not what God wants. This week's story suggests that the question we should really be asking is how and in what way can I help others, how can others benefit from what I do. That in failing to respond to God's invitation initially we can always change our minds and respond with integrity. The example of Jesus' life gives us a most powerful example of responding to the Father's call whole heartedly out of love – not for personal gain. Everything that Jesus did for humankind overflows with love. Anthony d Mello sj told a story about this challenge:

There were two brothers both of whom heard the call from God to serve. The younger brother left behind family and friends, left behind the woman he loved and hoped to marry one day, and became a missionary. He worked for years under tough conditions, facing the most difficult of circumstances and hardships and finally died from an indigenous disease in the remote country where he was serving. He was taken to the gates of heaven, where the Father said: Well done good and faithful servant. Because you have given a thousand talents of service, I give you a billionfold reward. Enter into my joy! The older brother ignored the call, married the woman of his dreams, ran a successful business, raised two children, and occasionally sent money to ‘the poor whom his brother served.’ He too died and was taken to the gates of heaven. God welcomed him and said: Well done, faithful servant. Because you have given ten talents of service, I give you a billionfold reward. Come, and enter into my joy! When the younger brother heard that his older brother had also been received into heaven, he was surprised, but pleased. “If I had it all to do again, knowing what I know now, I would still live my life exactly how I did.” De Mello concluded: “Good News indeed. A generous God, and a servant who gives for the sheer joy that love brings to service.” Shouldn't we be like this brother someone who serves God generously and joyfully for the sheer joy that love brings to service?

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi, we reach the end of the season of creation for this year, but we urgently need to pray all the more earnestly for a change of heart in Governments who fail to see that the tragedy creation faces in the near future and before creation implodes on itself.

Hearing Creation's Call for Justice and Peace:

On the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the last day of the Season of Creation, we ask that we may be inspired by his life of love and simplicity. May we make lifestyle choices that safeguard Creation, guarantee access to all life's sustaining resources, and respect the fundamental rights of every person and every creature now and into the future so that justice and peace will flow like a mighty river. We pray to the Lord.