

PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS OUR CALLING AS CHRISTIANS

An elderly man who was above eighty years of age was asked if he was afraid to die. In response, he stated that he was not afraid to die but was worried if he had done what God created him to do on earth or not. According to him, God sent each of us to the earth for a purpose or to do something for Him. In the world, to some extent, we work, speak, listen, or do things on God's behalf. To help us focus on doing God's work as God wants, we were advised in the Seminary to always remind ourselves that we were hired by Jesus to work in His vineyard. This will help us work for Jesus Christ instead of working against Him. For one to please his or her employer, the person must discern or seek how the employer wants the work to be done. Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, God has hired us to work for Him in the world. God cannot create us without an intention. During our priestly formation, we were encouraged to seek God's purpose for our lives. Today, it will be great if we think about our lives in the light of God's purpose for creating us. In the second reading today (1 Corinthians 9), St Paul stated that preaching the Gospel is God's purpose or mandate for his life. St. Paul tried his best to preach the Gospel despite all the challenges he had. He was focused and determined to fulfill his calling. In the Gospel reading today (Mark 1:29-39), Jesus pointed out to His Apostles that preaching the Gospel was what He came to do. Jesus preached the Gospel even amid persecution and rejection. Our world and Church now need more of those who will steadfastly stand with the Gospel truth amid criticisms, persecutions, rejections, and misunderstandings. PREACHING THE GOSPEL YIELDS MORE FRUIT WHEN IT IS DONE THROUGH ACTIONS OR DEEDS. St Paul preached about steadfastness in faith in his life. God healed many people of their sicknesses through St Paul but refused to heal St Paul his sickness despite his prayers (2 Corinthians 12). He referred to his sickness as a "thorn in the flesh". St Paul did not abandon his faith because God did not heal his sickness rather, he regarded his sickness as his share of the cross he needed to carry for his and our salvation. I was edified by the homily of a priest suffering cancer. His sickness did not diminish his faith and he still struggles to carry out some of his priestly duties as he can. WE PREACH OUR FAITH MORE WHEN WE ARE HAVING CHALLENGES. In the Gospel reading today, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, freed those possessed by demons, and healed those with varieties of sickness to preach about the immensity of God's power. Jesus through the healings, revealed that nothing is impossible for God to do (Luke 1:37). God, through the miracles happening in our world, reveals that nothing is impossible for Him. HOW CAN EACH OF US PREACH THE GOSPEL THAT JESUS HAS ALREADY PREACHED TO US? We preach humility by being humble. God taught us humility by humbling Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus is God, He treats us as if we are equal to Him. We need to treat each other as members of God's family. If we cannot relate as members of God's family on earth, how can we do that in Heaven? We preach love through our deeds. "Actions speak louder than words". Jesus was not after what He would gain, He was only interested in our salvation. Love entails sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed his comfort, time, and above all His human life for our good. While Judas Iscariot sold Jesus for his selfish interests. Judas Iscariot's action does not preach love. Please let us always examine our actions to decipher or discern whether they preach love or hate, humility or pride, or faith. MAY GOD HELP US IN DOING HIS WILL ON EARTH AND REWARD US WITH HEAVEN WHEN WE LEAVE THIS WORLD, AMEN.