

Thirteenth Sunday

My beloved brothers and sisters, many times in our lives, we look at the lives of the Saints, and we say to ourselves: "I CAN'T DO THOSE THINGS. I'll never be a saint!", and many people just give up trying. But God has given many of us the lives of Saints who were extremely simple- who never did great things; however, the secret of their great holiness, was that all they did, they did with great love, and they never gave up the struggle to become saints! One of the greatest of these is St. Theresa Lisieux. Indeed, her famous teaching was: "Do every thing that you do, with great love for God, and great love for your neighbor, and you will become a Saint!" She is one of the Church's greatest saints, and yet, she never did anything great! This is also the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel for today: God wants us to succeed, because He created us for this!

Jesus warns us that the way to sainthood will be a struggle. He is not trying to discourage us; rather, He is trying to empower us! For-warned is for-armed. Jesus tells us that to be His disciple that our love for God and for Him, must be put in first place; because, if we do not, we will always put ourselves into first place. It is the nature of sin in our lives! Because of original sin, and our personal sinfulness, we are always struggling to be gods over our lives, the lives of others and over the things of this world: "I'll do it my way!" To overcome this selfishness, demands our total commitment to friendship with God in Jesus. Jesus knows this struggle intimately, because this was the temptation to Him in the desert and in the garden of Gethsamani.

The struggle to turn away from sin and selfishness, is the cross we must pick up and carry everyday of our lives! But our Good God knows what He is doing! He knows that this is the only path to true and lasting happiness, because turning to selfishness does not, we because, we were built for God and for others.

St. Paul today reminds us in the 2nd reading, that to share in Christ's life, we must share in the whole reality of His life, which means His cross and His death to share in His resurrection! Beloved ones, it is hard to be conformed to Christ, to share in His life, but we do not do this alone, we do it in Him, through Him and with Him as well as for Him!