

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

My beloved brothers and sisters, you have heard me say to you before: if you put your confidence in any human person you will always be disappointed. That is why I often tell you, I am only God's donkey. My job as his priest is to carry the Word of God, Jesus, to you. Sometimes I do a better job than other times; but, Jesus still rides on the back of this donkey, even when the donkey is a real jackass!

That is what the readings of the day remind us. Jesus reminds us in the readings, that God alone is the source of Grace, He alone is the source of all light, and the source of all hope! The Saints were saints because they allowed themselves to be made wholly transparent to the Divine Glory of God; but they were still sinners who, by cooperating with the Grace of God, were made Saints by Him.

Nonetheless, God has chosen to use weak, sinful men and women to proclaim His Kingdom and His Good News! This confounds the plans of the devil which is intent upon sowing bad news and darkness!

Jesus explains to His followers that the scribes and Pharisees have lost touch with the source and the purpose of their service to the people of God. They have become conceited and self-centered, thinking that their religious solutions and practices were as important as the Law and the Prophets. They often made their own interpretations onerous for the poor farmers and working men that they were called to guide; while at the same time failing to live up to their own interpretations of the law. They forgot that they were simply His messengers, and not the givers of the law, and forgot the essence of the law found in the two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor! They forgot that the essence of the Law of God was to be found in God's Mercy and Love for His people.

God wants to be a sure anchor for us in the storms and tribulations that are a part of our human relationships and our relationship with God. The Law of God is meant to free us from our selfishness, and to liberate us to love like God loves. The Law of God is meant to be a firm foundation which gives us peace and stability in the midst of the storms of life! As His priest, I am called to carry the Living Word to His people. Sometimes, I need to be reminded by Jesus, that is my job; and when I do this and when you do this, we give hope and light in the midst

of the present darkness! On the other hand, neither you nor I can hesitate to shine the Light of Jesus into the darkness, even when that bright, white light may cause us to be unpopular and even when it is rejected. Souls are at stake! So, pray for this poor scruffy donkey, and pray for each other, that we will be good, kind, patient and loving messengers of the Good News; and especially pray that Jesus will make this poor donkey a truly saintly priest! Pray for each other, that God will make of you His Great Saints!