

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Heaven on earth

Bishops priests deacons sisters brothers seminarians lay people all gathered to celebrate a Saint. Not yet a Saint on the books anyway. Have to wait for his first miracle and then get him canonized in Rome for that. Beautiful music, entrance with Cardinal Amato from Rome, representing Pope Francis. After Kyrie, Lord have Mercy- Cardinal Amati read the Letter from Pope Francis declaring him Blessed Stanley Rother. Revealed Huge picture with screams and applause of joy and gratitude. A video at beginning told of his life as an ordinary boy that grew up on farm in a small town in Oklahoma. As A seminarian he flunked out but felt called to be priest. Bishop Reed gave him another chance. Rother was finally ordained in 1963 and 5 years later volunteered to go to our mission in Guatemala

He translated the Bible into their native Mayan dialect, started a school, clinic, taught farming, started a co-op, and just completely surrendered his life for the sake of the people that he served with compassion and love. An ordinary guy with an extraordinary desire to give to ordinary people. They called him the Ordinary Martyr.

Heaven is full of ordinary souls that were extraordinary in giving themselves away. We all want to end up in heaven. God has given each one of us ordinary people all the necessary tools and ability to get there. Our calling as Christians is to be able to accept them.

One of those tools is what St. Ignatius calls indifference. Indifference doesn't mean we don't care how things turn out, but being able to accept either outcome. Intentional indifference is when we can be ok with either outcome, then God can do extraordinary things through us.

St. Paul says,

"Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit."

Blessed Stanley Rother knew that he had to become indifferent to two outcomes. He knew that one of them could be his death. But he also knew that he could not be at peace with himself until he could accept that as a possibility. Life is Christ and death is gain. Rother would return to Guatemala mission to serve the people for Christ or he would die for Christ and spend eternity with the Lord. He was indifferent to either outcome.

In Rome, the Cardinals chapel, where they spend time in prayer as they prepare to cast their vote when electing a Pope, this scripture is hanging above the altar. It is this scripture that reminds the Cardinal not to desire the position of being Pope or to deny it if they are elected. They have to be open to following God's will whatever that might be.

Intentional indifference doesn't always involve life or death, or major life changes, although sometimes it does. It usually just involves ordinary choices like, can I accept being rejected and not loved, can I be ok with winning and losing, can I accept my spouse being wrong sometimes?

Do I compare myself to others? Comparison can be the thief of joy.

If I can ask God for the grace of indifference then I'm asking to be able to accept His choice and be ok with whatever that might be. Fr. Stanley Rother was the Shepherd that would not run. If I'm too stuck on a particular desire or wish then it may be because I'm running from something or someone else.

What is it in my life right now that I'm attached to? Can I ask God to help me be open to another outcome?

Because to magnify God might mean that I need to be indifferent to myself.