

3/3/19

Firm and steadfastly devoted to the works of the Lord.

The theme I chose for this weekend's reflection is "firm and steadfastly devoted to the works of the Lord". This brings to mind one of my favorite Scripture verses: "As long as it is the day, we must do the works of him who sent me. The night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). I love this quotation because it encourages me personally to keep trying at the task allotted to me, in good times and in bad. The theme is taken directly from the second reading (1 Corinthians 15:54-58). What kind of works are we devoted to? Some of us are called to be encouragers to others. This may involve approaching people with love and concern. What about if your work is to sow hope in our world? That would be daunting but keep at it every day: Be firm and steadfastly devoted (FSD) to Jesus. Don't give up your faith when hard times come. Even in the midst of your difficulties try to bear fruit that lasts. Remember, the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace. Christ will reward us for our labors.

What stood out to me in the first reading is this line that says, 'the fruits of a tree show the care it has had'. Let's take a moment to allow this word to dissolve our hearts. When was the last time you picked up a beautiful fruit from the grocery store? I hope you had time to be thankful for the farmer who grew it, sprayed with anti-bugs. I hope you spared a moment to appreciate those hands of several laborers who helped to harvest and package and get it over here for us to enjoy. Sirach says the fruits of a tree bears witness to the care it has received. This saying brings to mind the volume of work that precedes fruit-bearing. Trees need caring hands of the farmer to produce fruits. If you see someone's child who is very courteous and respectful don't forget the caring hands of their parents. In a sense, each and every one of us is the fruit growing on the tree of God. We are an expression of how much care and love the Father has bestowed. In another sense, we also the tree that God has nurtured to bear fruits. Let us be firm and steadfast about bearing fruits as disciples of Jesus. Jesus says to us in the gospel: 'a good tree produces good fruits and a bad tree produces bad fruits'. Good fruits include compassion, love, faithfulness, honesty, integrity, repentance and everything worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).

If we are not bearing the right kind of fruits in the right measure, the Lord wants us to assess ourselves and start over. This Wednesday will begin the season of Lent, a great opportunity to start over. Let us set our hearts at it and be willing to do better.

Praised be Jesus Christ

Now and Forever!