

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time – August 10/11, 2019 – Reflection

“Blessed is that servant whom his Master on arrival finds doing (what he’s supposed to do ... what he’s expected to do).”

(The Gospel of Luke)

A thousand years ago, as I went through eight years of Catholic Elementary school, I was privileged to be taught by religious women who were from the Sisters of St. Joseph. Most of them were wonderful teachers, some of the best I ever had in my life, and many of them were even better people.

Back then, the Sisters wore a black habit and veil that covered every part of their bodies except their face and their hands. All the black of their robes was set off by a white linen triangle at the peak of the brow ... to remind of the Holy Trinity maybe; a white starched bib over the heart ... to proclaim the purity of their love for God; a large crucifix worn about the neck ... to show devotion to Jesus and Him crucified; and a very large rosary worn at waist to show devotion to the Mother of God and the spouse of St. Joseph.

Most times, the nuns were able to walk silently, almost as if they were walking on the clouds of heaven, their feet hardly touching this vale of tears, earth ... I think they musta taken classes to perfect that walk in nun school! But even the best and the most stealthy of them had

trouble keeping those big rosaries from clinking as they walked, thus giving away their presence and position to the enemy ... us kids!

Whenever Sister would have to leave the classroom to go to the office or on some other mission, she would always leave us with a warning to do the work she had assigned us, to work quietly and keep our eyes to ourselves, and to remember that God and the angels were watching over us and would see and bring into the light any form of mischief or misbehavior and when Sister would come back, God help the child or the children or the class who disobeyed!

Of course, as soon as Sister left the room, there were some among us who would begin to chat while others would expound air cautioning them to be quiet ... SSSSSH HHHHH!!!! The rabble-rousers would station a lookout at the door to provide advance warning of Sister's return. And so, confident they were safe from discovery, the miscreants - I was NEVER one of those!! - would not do the required work, not keep silent, not obey, and not remember that God and the angels would see all and reveal all to Sister.

After awhile, the lookout would hear the clanking of the rosaries and spread the word in a stage whisper that coulda been heard in the next county ... SSSSSH HHHHH, Sista's comin'!!! (like she couldn't hear us!). All at once, this visage in black and white would appear in the doorway like the Grim Reaper which was apt, 'cause, boy, were we dead!!!

After the Ascension, the Lord gave us our marching orders and left us in charge. Go into the world and spread the Gospel. Act with justice. Love tenderly. Walk humbly with God. Be poor in spirit, meek and lowly, pure of heart. Forgive one another as I have forgiven you. Take up your

cross each day and follow after me and know that I am with you even to the end of time.

How many of us, knowing full well what God asks and expects of us, feel instead "outta sight, outta mind," and do what we darn well please? We're like misbehaving little schoolkids who can't be trusted for five minutes outta Sister's sight.

Sisters and brothers, even if we can't be trusted to do the right ... and we know darn well what it is ... even if we can't be trusted to do the good because of our love and respect for God, do it because, in each life, in a thousand little moments of gut checks, in a few moments of reckoning, in a deathbed moment of personal standing before the mercy seat, and on the Last Day when He will come to judge the living and the dead, we will answer to God; God who trusted us with the freedom of His own beloved children.

The scriptures tell us somberly, the Shepherd will separate the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, the worthy from the stubborn: the evil to eternal punishment, the righteous to eternal life.

You know neither the day nor the hour.

SSSSSHHHH!!! Sista's comin'!

SSSSSHHHH!!! The Lord's comin' ... look busy!!!