

My Dear People of God,

Today we celebrate, the Twenty Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time. It is amazing how time is flying by so fast. Soon, the holy seasons of Advent and Christmas will be upon us!

In the gospel reading today, Jesus poses the question: **Who do you say that I am?** This is a question that should come to us every day of our lives. Many of us know and are convinced that Jesus is God, that He is Son of God, that He is the Redeemer and Savior. That is why we come to Church, that is why we have crosses in our cars and homes, that is why we pray etc. But our intellectual convictions must be translated into the actions in our daily lives especially as we relate to one another.

This understanding should bring our attention to the second reading, from the Letter of St. James. This letter wants to push us to act out our faith in our lives, to manifest or to show the faith so that that we may not have it only in our hearts and in our minds. The apostle James is convinced that our actions are really important—more important than our words. St. James is concerned about social actions, about not proclaiming the Gospel to someone who has nothing without offering them something.

To illustrate this, let me relate a story of Mrs. Clotile Thibodaux who received news that her neighbor was seriously ill. In response Clotile said to the person who brought her the news, *‘I am so sorry to hear that, tell her that I will remember her in my prayers, and that I hope she will soon be feeling better.’* And Clotile was as good as her word. Later that evening, as she said her prayers she prayed very sincerely and fervently for her neighbor. In her prayer she said to God: *“Lord I want to commend my neighbor to you. She’s very seriously ill. She needs a lot of help, a lot of support.”* When she finished her prayers, she felt better but there was something bothering her.

When she went to sleep, she had a dream in which she found herself in dialogue with God. The Lord said to her: *“I can see you are concerned about your neighbor and she is in great need of help. You know what she needs most is someone to spend time with her and to help with the little things she cannot do for herself.”* In response, Clotile said: *“Lord, you are absolutely right. In fact, that is exactly what I was thinking when the news came to me.”* Then the Lord went on to ask Clotile: *“So when you were praying that your neighbor needs a lot of help and support, were you expecting me to come down and do it?”* At that, Clotile woke up and she knew exactly what she needed to do!

My dear brothers and sisters, St James today reminds and challenges us that if our faith does not manifest in our actions, then it is a dead faith. We are all familiar with the greatest commandment: **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself** (Mathew 22:35-37). This commandment in essence sums up what St

James is telling us today. In other words, **Love the Lord your God and let that love of God, manifest itself in the way you love your neighbor.** St. James challenges us to demonstrate our faith using our actions.

As we go into this new week, like Clotile, where and how is the Lord inviting and challenging us to demonstrate our faith?

Thanks and God bless

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