

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

In today's Gospel, we hear about how Jesus cured Simon's mother-in-law, and how she immediately gets up and waits on Jesus and His disciples. One might look at this the wrong way, in a world that values power as a great virtue. But in the Kingdom of God, it is not power, but love – love lived out in *service* – that is the most important virtue. Simon's mother-in-law recognizes this, and in joy pours herself out in service to Jesus and her other guests. This weekend, we celebrate several different groups which have service at their core: Scout Sunday, World Day of Consecrated Life, and World Marriage Sunday.

Scouting is designed to teach boys and girls, young men and women, to be people of service. They teach skills and leadership. At the heart of all leadership, though, is service to the community, the nation and the world. In my days as a scout, this was emphasized over and over.

Consecrated Life is also a life focused on service. Here we look at religious priests, brothers and sisters who have given their life in service to the Church, through prayer and action, all for the love of Christ. Their vocation – their call from God – has helped so many, and built up the Church. It is from the religious that we have hospitals, schools (from elementary through higher education), and incredible outreach to the poor (think of all that Mother Teresa did – and she was just one among many). Much of what we see as good in our society today was started by Religious Orders. The Religious have preached the Gospel to those in faraway countries, who never had the chance of knowing Christ. Many have died from martyrdom, giving the supreme witness to the Faith. They poured themselves out in service to others and to Christ – and they continue to do this today.

When we look at **Marriage**, we may not immediately see the connection with service, but the Sacrament of Matrimony is not simply a choice to live together, or to have joint checking accounts; it is a call from God for a man and woman to be an image of His love for the Church. In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her..." (Eph. 5: 25-26). The love between a husband and wife was created by God and then raised to a Sacrament by Christ to show us the love God has for us. How much does Christ love us? Well, He loves us to death – quite literally. He handed Himself over to death so that we might have life. And why? So that we could be holy (*sanctified*), and so be with Him forever in Heaven. Jesus came to serve, not to be served, and so He calls husbands and wives into this relationship of service to one another – service designed to help get the spouse to Heaven.

Too often, we don't think of marriage in this way, but marriage is not about saying, "What can you do for me?" but "How can I serve you?" (Remember, FAMILY means: Forget About Me, I Love You.) We look to the other and die to ourselves, our wants, our preferences, for the good of the other. Seeking the good of the other doesn't mean being a doormat, though, but desiring the other to have the greatest good – to get to Heaven. That desire then moves into action as it serves the other by helping the other to become a saint. While this mentality may be lost by many in our culture, this is why God made marriage – as a reflection of the self-denying, self-giving love at the Heart of the Trinity – the very Heart of God.

As we recognize those who serve as Scouts, Religious, and in Married relationships, may it call all of us to a greater desire to be like Christ and serve in love.