



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The second reading today is one of my favorites. When I was in College and Seminary, I spent a lot of time meditating on this whole section from the Letter to the Philippians. What most struck me, though, was the first part of chapter 2:

**If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of**

**selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also everyone for those of others.** (Philippians 2:1-4)

This was a wakeup call in how I looked at myself and how I was to treat others. **“Do nothing out of selfishness or vainglory,”** St. Paul so poignantly tells us. For me, this was (and still remains) a powerful question in my examination of conscience. “How have I acted selfishly today? How have I acted in vanity and conceit?” I can completely relate to Dr. Scott Hahn when he says, “I’m not much, but I’m all I think about!” St. Paul is reminding me (us) that we are called to be like Christ who did NOT think only of Himself, who did NOT act selfishly, but always **“humbly regard[ed] others as more important”** than Himself.

Think about what this looks like in your life. Think about how fast you drive... are you really thinking of others and their safety more than your need to get to a destination? When the kids are calling for your attention and you’re exhausted, do you really think of them as more important than yourself? I recently watched an episode of *The Chosen*, where a couple of children encounter Jesus. The director did a wonderful job of creating a typical child in Abigail – asking non-stop, probing questions! I was exhausted just trying to keep up with her prattle... and I didn’t have to respond to her! Jesus is portrayed as patiently answering her questions. He thought of this child as more important than Himself!

The reading continues by speaking of how Jesus, though He was God, emptied Himself to become one of us. It should blow our minds that the infinite God chose to become finite, the omnipotent One chose to become weak, He who created time and space and is beyond them chose to live in a very certain place (Israel) at a very certain time (1<sup>st</sup> century). He emptied Himself, not grasping at the divinity that was His by nature (as Adam and Eve had grasped at divinity). Out of love and obedience, He accepted death, even the horrific and excruciating death on a cross. This is all because He loves you and me. This is all because He thought of you and me as worth it, as more important than Himself.

Jesus (and St. Paul) invites us today to gaze upon His life and death. By spending time meditating on the incredible mystery that is our redemption in Christ, several things will happen: we will become more grateful to God for His gifts. We will come to know the living God in a more intimate and living relationship. Finally, we will become more like Him in His love. We will see this in how we selflessly think of others a more important than ourselves, generously giving of ourselves, not counting the cost. We will also see this in how we accept each cross in our lives as a way to grow in love of God and others.

I invite you, pray on this second reading. Meditate on it. Gaze upon it. “Chew it” (as it were). Do this not for a day, or for this week, but for a lifetime and allow God to work an incredible change in you!