

Homily Ideas for

The Fourth Sunday after Easter near the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker (B)

From the reading from the Acts: "...it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean ... this man stands before you healed."

From Psalm 118: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD."

From the reading from 1 John: "Beloved, we are God's children now;"

From the Gospel by John: "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice,

- ❖ Today is the Fourth Sunday in the Easter Season and also near the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.
- ❖ The juxtaposition of the feast and this Easter Season Sunday can be taken as a reminder that as Catholic Christians we are both children of God and a people who work. We do not leave our life as workers outside the church doors nor do we leave our spiritual life as Catholic Christians outside the workplace doors.
- ❖ I remember as a young child learning this from my father in two settings. The first was walking with him occasionally, for part of his route, as he delivered mail in our neighborhood. I noticed that he tipped his hat as he passed the Catholic Church and asked him why? He told me it was to acknowledge the presence of Jesus in the Church. The second was shortly after I started caddying at a local golf course. I was caddying for him and shouted an explicative at the golf ball when he mishit the ball, as if it were the ball's fault. He quietly let me know that such language was not the kind of language we should use. As I result I resolved to say a short prayer to myself whenever I heard the name of God or Jesus used inappropriately. I must say that as a caddy, I ended praying an awful lot on the golf course over the rest of the time I spent as a caddy.*
- ❖ My point is that my father showed me that his work as a mail carrier and my work as a caddy were not separate from our lives as children of God. My father witnessed to his faith and in doing so developed my faith.
- ❖ In today's gospel Jesus is quoted as saying he has other sheep that he must lead and that those sheep would hear his word. I believe that we, as children of God, become his voice to the sheep that are not yet in his flock. I believe we become his voice by the way we live our lives. In the workplace when we are truthful, honest, and just, we are Christ's voice speaking

up for truth, honesty, and justice. When we are respectful, patient, and caring, we are Christ's voice speaking up in love for respect, patience, and care for all.

- ❖ Beyond the way we interact with the people in our workplaces, there is the work that we do and the way we do it. In working, beyond earning a living for ourselves and our families, we can and ought to be contributing to the common good of our community. All of our jobs, our careers, grew out of some need in our communities for that type of work. Those who come in the name of the Lord should be doing their work—paid or non-paid—so that it is well done and a true benefit to the community.
- ❖ A movie from a few years ago, *Five People You Meet in Heaven*, really makes the point that what we do and how we do it affects far more people than we tend to recognize as we go about our work. To me it reinforced the need to realize each day that **I am Christ's hands, voice, and attitude** in the places where I work. Not alone, not the only one, but still by my faith I am a child of God. As a child of God, I am Him present in my workplace.
- ❖ **Alternative ending:** Over the recent past we have prayed for people in several careers or vocations, bishops, pastors, government officials, military personnel in war zones, for example. Beginning today, we are going to add a prayer for people in various occupations. Over the next year, we will pray for persons engaged in all the career clusters identified by the US Department of Labor. We do this to emphasize that work, in all its variants, is God's work. The work that each of us is doing, is the work that God wants us to do, at this time and to the best of our ability, for the benefit of all his creation.

Submitted by Louis Trenta

*Note: If you do not have a story that you can share, you may use this one by saying something like, "I recently read about a man who as a young child learned this from his father in two settings...." then adapt as necessary.