

LESSON ON SERVICE

Thoughts taken from In The Footsteps of Jesus by Father Parent, pgs. 91-111

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Father,

Your word in Isaiah 55:9 says, *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”* Knowing this I ask you Dear Lord to help me to be inspired by the Holy Spirit so that my actions and thoughts each day will build your kingdom and fulfill your will. I offer up to you each day all I shall think do or say, uniting it with what was done on earth by Jesus Christ your Son. Doing this I pray my life will be pleasing to you. Help me to live in love with you, accept your will - by doing this I will live a life of service responding to all things in your Holy Name. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

In 1958, the year the Institute was founded, I (Father Parent) had deliberately chosen the term “will of God” to indicate each individual member of the Institute. I rejoiced to see the young men giving themselves with such ardor and generosity and I said to myself as I looked at each one: he is truly a “Voluntas Dei”, i.e., a concrete, visible manifestation of the will of God. With enthusiasm I watched the growth of these young men who came from all the corners of the earth: Canada, United States, Sri Lanka, Haiti, France, India, Laos...for me each one was a living, active, loving and present “will of God.” This appellation responded to the needs of my faith; I found this to be fulfilling and inspiring. The Church asked us to call the group of young men “The Voluntas Dei Institute” instead of simply “Voluntas Dei”. We accepted the desire of the Church as a will of God.

Nevertheless, we can say that each member, in the depths of his heart, strives to merit the title “Voluntas Dei” because the Church has chosen us to be persons of service. For to “be in service” is to devote ourselves, body and soul, to doing the will of the Father. We are to be visible manifestations of God’s action in the world around us, living, acting and loving as God would.

I OBSERVE

Jesus abandoned his whole self to the service of His Father. It engaged all of his activities` His thoughts and desires, it directed His whole life, presided over His death and continued in the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit to compel His gift.

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, so that their faith will not fail. Jesus envelops us in the force and charm of His personality. Even though His prayers are frequently addressed to the Father to whom He is totally abandoned, He does not forget us and

He wants each of us to participate in His same glory. Jesus, a living person, attaches himself to each of us. He makes himself the marvelous link that binds us to one another in the same love and the same sense of service. He moves us to generously seize the thoughts, desires and will of his Father, so that we may truly become the "beings of Service" that the Church expects us to be.

To do this we have to take the time to reflect on Jesus and His way of recognizing his dependence on the Father, we will be profoundly touched by his attitudes and perhaps we would become more deeply conscious of this truth: that we must behave towards Jesus as he behaved towards the Father. The Church gives us the liturgy and the sacraments, we must dedicate time to meditating, praying, reading the bible and participating in family or team meetings. This way we will become more accessible to others and much more open and welcoming. Taking the example of Jesus we will go to others without letting ourselves be blocked by the grimness of their character or by the mystery of their spiritual journey. If we keep our eyes open, we will not lack of occasions to serve.

I EVALUATE MY WAY OF LIVING

1. What means do I use to grow in my knowledge of Jesus so that I would become aware of how He would be in the situations of my life
2. Am I aware that living out the will of God in my daily life was being of service
3. The Father encouraged Jesus calling Him his beloved Son. Have there been times in our own life when I became aware of God's encouragement?
4. During the day do I find that I avoid situations or people that are uncomfortable for me or do I think of What would Jesus Do and respond as I believe He would

MY YES TO GO FORWARD

I must continue in my desire to know God so that I can serve Him. In order to know Jesus it is important to go to a quiet place, and read scripture where Jesus is engaging another, picture the scene and place myself in it. I will pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal God ways to me

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Father,

I desire to love you my Lord with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength. I am aware that everything I possess is a gift from you. To do your will is my desire for I am aware that that is the service that you desire from me. I thank you Lord for the gift of being able to exercise free will, to be able to say Yes or No and I pray the Holy Spirit will give me the knowledge to always do as you desire.

Thank You Lord for my life and for the desire to service you.

Amen