



Bible Study

Fifth Sunday of Easter Year A

St. Maria Goretti and
St. Peter Claver
Parishes

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Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. Jn. 14:11-12. NABRE

Reading I: Acts 6:1-7

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

Morpheus in the movie "The Matrix" is famous for these words, "There's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path." The truth of this saying lies in the fact that it is often easier to know what to do than to do it. As we continue on our Christian journey, we often find it easier to know the Commandments of God and the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than to follow them. We often find that our words do not match our conduct. But what if we stopped professing our faith in words and simply acted our faith in Jesus. Then we would not only know the path to heaven, we would also walk it.

In the first reading, the early church might have confronted the dilemma of preaching charity and love of neighbor, but not doing it. Hellenists,



Can you walk
the walk and not
just talk the
talk?

Greek speaking Jews, who returned to live in Palestine from the Jewish Diaspora, were treated differently from Aramaic speaking Jews in the distribution of food to the needy (v. 1). The apostles were occupied with the preaching and teaching of new converts and had little time to regulate the fair distribution of charity (vv. 2-4). They were preaching charity and not living it. In order to correct this wrong, the twelve decided to practice what they preached by selecting seven who appear to be Hellenists (all had Greek names). Their main function was to make the Word of God alive among His people through serving (In Greek *diakoonein* - διακονειν) the least among them. The Laying of hands (vv. 5-6) on someone symbolized the bestowal of a blessing, commissioning of a successor and granting authority. (Gen. 48:13; Lev. 1:4; 3:2; Num. 27:23.1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; Heb. 6:2). In this way the early church spoke the word of God and lived it. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What does your life style say about what you believe?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS "IN ORDER TO SERVE"

1569 "At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.'" At an ordination to the diaconate only the bishop lays hands on the candidate, thus signifying the deacon's special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his "diakonia."

1570 Deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an imprint ("character") which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the "deacon" or servant of all. Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.

Reading II 1 Peter 2:4-9

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

In this reading, St. Peter demonstrated that there is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path. He told the new Christians that they are "living stones" of a New Spiritual Temple, held together by Jesus Christ, the cornerstone. He quoted Isaiah 29:16 where the prophet gave God's promise to build a lasting temple in Zion, that is, Jerusalem. The cornerstone of the temple will be the Messiah. That prophecy has been fulfilled.

To Christians, Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation of the Spiritual Temple. We too are living stones of the Spiritual Temple which Christ has formed. This makes us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. Being holy requires that we act holy. Through our actions we tell the story of the Holy God and His saving deeds (v. 9). Our holiness is characterized by our faithfulness and obedience, by what we do and what we say (v. 5). **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How do your words show that you are a holy person?

Gospel: John 14:1-12

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

A role model is a person whose behavior in a particular role is imitated by others. In some cases, imitating a person in a particular role requires taking on the same personality, conduct and the value system of the person who is imitated. It is the conduct that becomes important not the words. Perhaps this is the source of the adage, "*Actions speak louder than words.*" As Christians, our actions and our words must be the same. If we speak the Word of God, we must live the Word of God. We cannot live by the motto, "Do as I do, not as I say."

In the Gospel, Jesus tries to calm the disciples' fears caused by the announcement of His departure (13:13). He will be leaving them and He tells them not to be troubled (v. 1). That is just like the dentist saying, "Don't worry," as he begins to extract a tooth. The words just do not fit the situation. This is why actions speak louder than words. To demonstrate this fact, Jesus reveals His imminent death as a test of their faith that He is the Messiah. Stop with the worrying, He says, "believe in God and believe in Me." Jesus Himself was worried (see John 11:33, 12:27, and 13:21). He demonstrated His belief and confidence in His redemptive act that would take place on the cross by speaking words of comfort to the apostles. In a way he said, "*Do as I do, and as I say.*" His words were consistent with His actions. In verse 12, Jesus shows that faith in Him must be both lived and preached. He stressed the importance of faith by showing the consequences of believing that He is the divine Messiah. If we believe in Him, we will do the work that He did. Yes, we will do even greater works through the power of the Holy Spirit, because Jesus is God and can do all things. If we believe in what Jesus did for us, we must do what He did for others, as well. We are to tell what He did by the way we live His Word. We must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and free the captives. These words of Jesus (vv. 12-15) were fulfilled after Pentecost when three thousand came to believe in Him in one day while many did not believe in Him during His life time (Acts 2:3; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). Faith in Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire after His death. This was accomplished through the work of the disciples, who preached the Word of God and lived it.

As Christians, we cannot live by the motto. "Do as I do, not as I say". Our acts of love speak louder than our words. Preach the word of God and use words if necessary. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What lifestyle changes do you have to make to show that you believe in Jesus Christ?

PRAY ABOUT IT.

Monday

Read 1 Pet. 2:4-9. Spend ten minutes in silent prayer. Consider offering yourself to a ministry.

Tuesday

Read John 11:33. Comfort someone and tell them what God has done in your life.

Wednesday

Read Acts 6:1-7. Make a financial donation to the poor.

Thursday

Read John 14:11-12. Do a friend a favor.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

MINISTRY

The Word "Ministry." - The common New Testament term for the ministry is diakonia, and along with it we find diakonos, "minister," ho diakonon, "he who ministers," and diakonein, "to minister." All these words have a very extensive application within the New Testament and are by no means restricted to denote service within the Christian church; even when so restricted the words are used in a great variety of meanings: e.g. (1) discipleship in general (John 12:26); (2) service rendered to the church because of the "gifts" bestowed (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:5), and hence, all kinds of service (Acts 6:2; Matt 20:26); (3) specifically the "ministry of the Word" (Eph 4:12), and most frequently the "apostleship" (Acts 1:17; 20:24; 21:19; Rom 11:13, etc.); (4) such services as feeding the poor (Acts 6:1; 11:29; 12:25), or organizing and providing the great collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom 15:25; 2 Cor 8:4,19, etc.); (5) such services as those rendered by Stephanas (1 Cor 16:15), by Archippus (Col 4:17), by Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7), etc. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Resources: John, Neal M. Flanagan, O.S. M. ; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1004-1005; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2017*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 124-127; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Sunday Readings Cycle A, Kevin O' Sullivan, O.F.M. Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 174-181; <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism>

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2017