

HOMILY 25TH SUN OT YRA 2017

There was a head hunter who hired new corporate executives for other companies. When he interviewed potential candidates, he likes to disarm them. He loosens his tie, puts his feet up on the desk, offers the candidate a drink and engages in some small talk. When the candidate is all relaxed he leans over and asks the big question: “What’s your purpose in life?” He said it is amazing how many executives fall apart at that question. Then one day he was surprised. He got the candidate all relaxed and then asked: “What’s your purpose in life?” Without blinking an eye the candidate said: “To go to heaven and take as many people as possible with me.” This time it was the head hunter that was speechless. Good answer. If I were asked that question I would like to steal his answer. So, what’s your purpose in life?

In the second reading St. Paul is at the end of his life and states: “For me life is Christ, and death is gain.” I think this is another way of stating what our wise job candidate stated. He lived for Christ so when he dies he will go to heaven and take a lot of others with him. I have come to realize that the only way to find a worthwhile purpose and meaning in life is life in Christ, living a Christian life. Take work for example. Our work is how we are able to financially support ourselves and our families. If you have a job where you are not involved in anything immoral or illegal your job is very good. But financial gain cannot be your only purpose. If it is, your work will be hollow. What gives your job purpose and meaning is how you treat people and how you serve others. How do you treat your peers, your boss, the people that work for you, and your customers? Is your work place a better place because you are there? I have come to realize that regardless of your work, that is what give is purpose and meaning. This is work in Christ. How about being a parent? It is really good to provide material possession and financial support for your children. Our culture kind of pushed us to provide as

many organized activities for our children and lesson as possible, but money and activities is not what gives our lives as parent's purpose and meaning. What does give our lives purpose and meaning as parents is teaching them how to live in Church, bringing them to Church, sharing your faith with them, teaching them how to use their gifts and abilities to serve others. This is being a Parent in Christ. In his book *The Pursuit of Happiness*, David Myers surveyed all of the research done on happiness. He looked at money, power, fame and all of the other things that the world tells us lead to happiness. In the end he concludes that the happiest people are those who are active in their church and some form of social ministry serving others. Life is Christ.

In the Gospel reading the workers thought the land owner was unfair because they were comparing themselves to others. We have to stop doing that. Life in Christ is following him with whatever we have the best we can. We bring different things to others in service of Christ depending upon the season of our life, our unique situation, the burdens we are carrying and the grace we receive. That changes at different times in our lives. It is about our unique situation and has little to do with what others are doing or receiving.

The second half of St. Paul's statement: "death is gain." We are all going to die, right? None of us is getting out of here alive. And if we lived a life in Christ we are going to heaven. That is a gain. That is good news! We sometimes look at death as evil, but it is not. It is our transition to heaven, to eternal life. We experience other people's death as evil because we miss them, but we are only going to be separated from them for a very short time in comparison to eternity. I want to live life in Christ so I can spend eternity with the people that I love. If you live life in Christ you are going to take a lot of people with you.

So, what's your purpose in life? To go to heaven and take as many people as possible with you? Life is Christ and death is gain.