

HOMILY
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 12-13, 2022

The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as far that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

I first heard this poem when I was just a child, and it made quite an impression on me. The choices we make in our lives make a difference. In the Gospel Reading today, I think Jesus is telling us to take the road less taken. Blessed are you who are poor; woe to you who are rich. Blessed are you who are now hungry; woe to you that are filled now. Blessed are you who are now weeping; woe to you who laugh now. Blessed are you when people hate you; woe to you when people speak well of you.

Is this consistent with the message we are getting from our culture? Is this consistent with the message we hear on social media? The truth is that probably none of us fall into the blessed or the woe groups. None of us are poor, hungry or persecuted for our faith. Jesus was addressing issues of the day. I think Jesus is telling us today that unhappiness comes from denying the spiritual on behalf of physical fulfillment only. If we focus too much upon the stuff of this world, there is no room for God in our lives and there is no room for other people in our lives. God has created all of the wonderful things of this

world just for us. God's creation is very good; but when we are focused upon physical satisfaction only, we will never find fulfillment, happiness or joy. Fulfillment, happiness and joy come from within, they come from the spiritual.

I came across some beatitudes written by Pope Francis for All Saints Day 2016, and I find them particularly meaningful for us today. *"Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others, and forgive them from their heart."* Can you remain faithful to people when they hurt you? I have found that most of the time when someone does something to hurt me, it is more about what is going on with them at the time than me. Sometimes they do not realize they hurt me. Sometimes I may not realize that I have done something to hurt them. Can we just let go of the anger and the impulse to get even and forgive? ***The road less taken.***

"Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalized, and show them their closeness." When we think about reaching out to the abandoned and marginalized we frequently think of monetary help; and that is good. But, can we look into the eyes of someone who is struggling with their gender identity, their sexual orientation, their addiction and just let them know that they are loved? ***The road less taken.***

"Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home." Are we doing everything we can to be good stewards of the world that God has entrusted to us? ***The road less taken.***

"Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others." Can we put someone else's needs ahead of our own, even if it is someone we do not know, someone we have no responsibility to help or someone we do not even like? ***The road less taken.***

"Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians." Can we recognize that all Christians are our brothers and sisters in Christ? ***The road less taken.***

Love & Peace,
Fr. Jim