

Chaplain's Bulletin July 2, 2023



Dear Folks,

Old Riddle: Where does an eight-hundred-pound gorilla sleep? Answer: Anywhere he wants to.

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” —C.S. Lewis. We remember Jesus’ words in Revelation 3:15-16 (what He said about luke-warm Christians, ouch!). Either Jesus is the ruling reality, the eight-hundred-pound gorilla in our lives, or we are not doing Christianity.

There are lots of factors in life we can’t control, but there are choices we can make, and how we make them tells the story. Life has hard choices. Sometimes it means choosing against something that is very, very good for the sake of something more important. What we tell ourselves we believe, what we think we are like, what we claim to be about is one thing. What do our choices say about us? That is the reality (“By their fruits you shall know them [Matt 7:16]).”

One youth minister told me, “ever ask people to choose between God and sports, because God will lose every time. “What does that say about the culture of that parish, the beliefs that had come to be common there? Would Jesus be happy about how they were doing church?”

When there isn’t enough time to do everything, even everything really, really important (which is generally always) what gets cut and what gets protected? When there isn’t enough money for everything, even everything really important, what gets cut, and what gets protected?

Prayer is hugely important, and we would (I hope) agree that it is an essential part of being a disciple of Jesus. It is also the easiest thing to put off when the crunch comes. “Half an hour’ meditation each day is essential, except when you are busy. Then a full hour is needed.” — St. Francis de Sales

God calls us to work with less than perfect situations. If we wait until things are how we think they should be, it will never happen. If God asks us at the end of our lives how we have served the Kingdom, it would not be good to have to say, “ would have done great things, God, but I was just too busy,” or “the pastor was such a jerk,” or “the church had so many hypocrites,” or any such thing. I’m not envisioning that being a happy conversation.

In times and places where people are being put to death for being Christian, the choices can be clear and stark. At other times and places, it may make be easier to let it get fuzzy in our minds. If it has been a long time since we had to choose against something we really, really wanted for the sake of the

Kingdom, maybe it's time to do some inventory.

Is Jesus our 800-pound gorilla? Or is something else? There can only be one.

Blessings,

Fr. Jim