

August 30, 2009

(Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Fr. Raymond E. Lavelle, Sr. Associate
St. Paul the Apostle Church

Why don't you priests talk to us about real life problems, concerns, the basics, the real issues, instead of that Biblical, theological jargon? You say, "Talk to us, challenge and confront us!"

Today I will do just that! And I will use the text from today's Gospel:

"These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me."

Some of you come to church late, and leave early.

We begin by saying these people pay me lip service but their hearts are far from me.

And some still come late and leave early.

You spend more time watching & listening to T.V. and the computer rather than giving time, and attention to your children, teenagers and spouse.

Rarely do you allow your children/teenagers to defend themselves verbally. The teenager might say, "We had words today. He used his, but I couldn't use mine!"

Rarely do you ever apologize to your children/teenagers or your spouse.

"These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me."

"I know enough about my Catholic Faith so don't need to subscribe to the Catholic Times, or even take home a bulletin."

When you are asked about some practice or law of the Catholic Church, you use the cop out, "I don't know; the Catholic Church is always changing things."

"These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me."

"I know I shouldn't swear, use God's name in vain, or tell dirty jokes or gossip."

"I don't believe in registering in a parish or using my envelopes to support the parish."

"Yes, I have a Bible, but I never or rarely open it or read it."

"These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me."

“I deny having a problem with alcohol, yet I can be a social drinker.”

“I don’t see any harm in drinking and driving or road rage.”

“It’s alright to dabble in recreational drugs, if you don’t get caught, or your children and spouse don’t know.”

“I skim the internet looking at pornography but that’s alright, unless my spouse knows or my children know.”

“I know that I should have my child, children baptized, but Father will insist that I attend Mass regularly.”

“These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me.”

“Even though I don’t go to church, I expect to have a Catholic funeral at St. Paul’s.”

“I don’t think it is necessary to be registered or use envelopes to support our church, so I don’t.”

“I want to be married with a Mass, even though I rarely go to Mass.”

“These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me.”

“I know that I should go to reconciliation, confession, penance, more often, but I don’t.”

“I know that I haven’t forgiven two persons, I, myself, and a person or family member.”

“I know that I should apologize to him or her, but...”

“I know that I should admit, maybe I was wrong, and should or could ask for forgiveness...”

“I mouth the Our Father every week, ‘Forgive us...as we forgive those who trespass against us’, meaning: those who stomp, or trample over us, walk over us...”

“Maybe I should be silent, and not say anything when in the Our Father it mentions I forgive those who trespass against me or my family.

Maybe I won’t verbalize the Our Father until.....

“These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me.”

“I am not hooked on the internet, but I enjoy browsing for pornography.”

“I know I should go to confession, penance or reconciliation, but it has been years and”I don’t believe in confessing my sins to a man.’

“It doesn’t matter if I or we don’t go to Mass every Sunday, even though God gives us 168 hours a week and asks for only one hour of the week, just for Him.”

“These people pay me lip service, but their hearts are far from me.”

“I don’t see a need for a new or larger church, even though we have two Masses being celebrated simultaneously at 10:30.”

“I silently protested the construction of a new church, by not making a pledge.”

“I have a clean record. I have never volunteered for any activity in the parish or joined any suggested group involvement in at St. Paul’s Parish.

If you remember we began our homily by mentioning that some of you think or say we priests don’t talk about real issues. The Basics, just theological jargon.” You mentioned talk to us, challenge and confront us.

We priests should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable!

I thought to myself, how would Christ bring this homily to a conclusion?

Maybe Christ would look each one of you in the eyes, and with outstretched arms (symbolizing his crucifixion) say to each and every one of you this thought:

“I love each one of you unconditionally”. And He would again say it, “I love each one of you unconditionally.....

Amen!