



Daily Reflections

August 29, 2018

Scripture

2 Thess. 3: 6-10, 16-18

We instruct you, brothers and sisters,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to shun any brother
who walks in a disorderly way
and not according to the tradition they received from us.
For you know how one must imitate us.
For we did not act in a disorderly way among you,
nor did we eat food received free from anyone.
On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked,
so as not to burden any of you.
Not that we do not have the right.
Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you,
so that you might imitate us.
In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that
if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.
May the Lord of peace himself
give you peace at all times and in every way.
The Lord be with all of you.
This greeting is in my own hand, Paul's.
This is the sign in every letter; this is how I write.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

Our Scripture Reflection

"Shunning a brother" may seem to be a rather harsh and inappropriate way to discipline someone who has gone astray, but for Paul it was a life saving measure:

1. Paul had a strong belief in the Church as Christ's Body here on earth. To harm the Church was to cause harm to Christ's very Presence and a horrible thing to do.

2. Paul saw the separation that was the result of shunning not as an act of condemnation, but rather, as an attempt to win the person back. In other words, Paul thought that if the heretical member of the Church became lonely from the shunning, he would change his ways, repent and seek reconciliation.

Paul was a builder and never a destroyer.

Food for your Journey

Some years back, the Staples office-supply company was trying to boost its online sales. In 2005, it came out with a promotional gimmick, the "easy" button. It was a large, red, plastic button that did essentially nothing, but had the word "easy" written across it. The button matched up with the company's advertising slogan for that year: "That was easy." (See Homiletics, "This Might Hurt," March 30, 2008.)

Originally, the easy button was just a visual prop for TV commercials, but Staples customers wanted to see more of it. After store managers were deluged with inquiries from customers asking where they could buy their own easy button, the company brought it out as an actual product. The easy button was a novelty item -- it still did nothing -- but something about the concept appealed to people. Globally, more than 1.5 million easy buttons -- with the word "easy" translated into a variety of languages -- had been sold by the end of 2006.

And no wonder. There are lots of things in life we wish could be as easy as pushing a button.

Like motivation. Anyone who's ever tried to kick an unhealthy habit or addiction, or simply get more organized and intentional about living life, has wished at times for something like an easy button.

Motivation is hard. It runs hot and cold. There are moments when we feel all fired up and ready to take on the world, and other times when procrastination takes over. Our efforts at changing ourselves lose all momentum. If only we could keep our motivation consistently high!

A Prayer from the Heart

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.