Ordinary 26A – 2026

There is a wonderful story about a group of military leaders who succeeded in building a super computer that was able to solve any problem--large or small, strategic or tactical. These military leaders assembled in front of the new machine for a demonstration. The engineer conducting the demonstration instructed these officers to feed a difficult tactical problem into it. The military leaders proceeded to describe a hypothetical situation to the computer and then asked the pivotal question: attack or retreat? This enormous super computer hummed away for an hour and then printed out its one-word answer . . . YES. The generals looked at each other, somewhat stupefied. Finally, one of them submits a second request to the computer: YES WHAT? Instantly the computer responded: YES, SIR.

The Pharisees, like these generals, were accustomed to people saying "Yes, sir" to them. They were the religious authorities. They were used to being treated as such. But there was a new teacher in town, a teacher who was threatening their authority. The Pharisees were alarmed. They feared Jesus' popularity, his ability to heal and to perform miracles. In their eyes, Jesus was preaching heresy and leading people away from the religious traditions that defined the Jews. The Pharisees wanted to expose him as a fraud. It was in this context that Jesus told a story about a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard." The boy immediately said, "No." Later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to his other son and said the same thing. This one answered, "O.K." but he never got out to the vineyard. Then Jesus asked a simple question: "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Then Jesus delivered the punch line, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him." (NIV)

That really was a punch line, and the Pharisees were the ones who were punched. I imagine Jesus heard some gasps and "How dare he!" from the crowd that day. It was unthinkable to compare the righteous Pharisees to blatant sinners like the tax-collectors and prostitutes. Didn't he know that the Pharisees were too good to be lumped together with the likes of them? Didn't he know that only those people with the right "credentials," so to speak, would make it into the Kingdom of God? What was Jesus talking about and why was he excoriating the best people in town?

The speed of light:

William Tarbell was explaining the consequences of light's traveling at 186,000 miles per second. "*It means the starlight shining in your window left the star about the time Shakespeare was writing his plays. The light has been traveling all that time to reach you and provide its light. In the same way, the work of the first disciples still influences you. Centuries ago, men and women were commissioned to make disciples of all nations. Although they have been dead for almost two thousand years, the effect of their work has traveled through history and touched us. It is felt in our lives and in our Churches today.*" [Dr. William P. Barker, *Tarbell's*, (Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook Church Ministries, 1994).]

A handful of people 2,000 years ago with no social status or higher education or political influence turned the world upside down. How? The Holy Spirit worked through them. Why? Because they were totally dedicated to Christ. Like the first son in Jesus' parable, they repented of their infidelity to Jesus during his arrest and surrendered their lives to Jesus with total commitment. There is no limit to what **we can do in this world if Jesus truly is our Lord. (https://frtonyshomilies.com/).**

Andrew the apostle:

A pastor met one of his members on the street who had missed Sunday Mass the previous Sunday. "*What did you preach about on Sunday?*" the man inquired. "*I took my text from John 1 and spoke about Andrew,*" was the reply. "*Andrew!*" the parishioner exclaimed in surprise. "*Why, I hardly remember him at all among the disciples. He didn't write any of the books of the Bible, did he? What made you talk about him?*" The priest smiled. "*I don't suppose many people would call Andrew great, but the one significant thing about him is that every time he is mentioned in the Bible, he's introducing someone to Jesus! First, we see him bringing his brother Simon to the Lord. Next, he's escorting a young lad to the Savior who miraculously used the boy's simple lunch to feed a multitude. And finally, he is directing a group of seeking Greeks to Jesus.*" The parishioner walked away thoughtfully, for he had received a new glimpse of the importance of that unpraised apostle (*Illosaurus*).

We need more Andrews in the Church. We need more disciples who are directing their friends and their family to Jesus. Christ has called us to make an impact on this community. "*Yes, Father, I will go.*" We are those who have said we would go. The question is, have we gone? Is Christ Lord of our lives? Are we having an impact on those around us? (https://frtonyshomilies.com/).

Indignant protestor or a well-intentioned procrastinator.

A certain nurse won the admiration of her entire community with her patience, her cheerfulness, her genuine concern for others. She gave far more of herself than anyone could ever expect. Her salary was inadequate by any standard, and one day a physician friend spoke to her about that. "*Nurse,*" he said, "*Why don't you get out of this backward little community and go where they will pay you a decent salary. God knows you are worth it.*" With a smile she answered kindly, "*If God knows I'm worth it, that's all that matters to me.*" — Does God know you are worth it? Am I a good worker in God's vineyard?" An indignant protestor? Just a well-intentioned procrastinator? God needs **laborers** for the vineyard. Can He count on me? Can I pass the test of availability, sensitivity, and accountability to Him? Let us pray … (https://frtonyshomilies.com/).