

Without Cost

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

June 14, 2026

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When Bakhita came to Italy from Sudan, she was given a small silver crucifix by a man who would introduce her to Christianity, more specifically, to Catholicism. She later recounted, “when he handed it to me, I noticed that he kissed it with great devotion. He explained to me that Jesus Christ was the son of God, and that he died for us. I remember how, as I looked at the crucifix, I experienced a strange feeling which I could not explain.” (13) What is significant about that crucifix is another comment Bakhita would make about it. She said it was the first thing she ever owned. This is shocking for those of us who live in the United States and own many possessions.

Our Gospel today ends with the powerful words, “without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” Jesus says this to his disciples right after giving them authority to preach the Good News, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons. His followers would not need many possessions to be holy or do the work of God. For him, the Gospel is not for profit.

Not for profit work is much different than the world of business. In the business world, there is an emphasis on making

money, power starting from the top, compensating employees so they can have upward mobility, and marketing products or services in the most attractive way to generate sales. All of this has its place and is a necessary part of life, including within church administration. At the same time, the nonprofit world has a lot to teach everyone. The nonprofit world emphasizes improving people's lives, identifying the real needs of the community, building power from the bottom-up, sharing resources as effectively as possible, and most importantly, finding motivation not solely through compensation, but through purpose and meaning.

Bakhita lived between both of these worlds, the nonprofit and the profit. In her early life, she was a very happy child who loved to play with the other children in her village. She lived in the world of family and community. From the time she was abducted until arriving in Italy, though, she became part of the business world, not as a businesswoman, but as an object to be bought and sold by the businessmen. Here in Venice, however, she was finally able to get out of the business world, a world that literally scarred her body. Her way out was through Christianity and being declared a free person by the civil authorities. Both occurred in this very place, her freedom in November 1889 and her baptism 1890.

Bakhita shows us that the Gospel moves us beyond the business world.

How does the simplicity of Bakhita move me to seek a happiness that possessions cannot give? How can I better value my liberation as a Christian and free person instead of taking both for granted?

As we continue with this mass, let us pray for the ability to see more to our lives than the world of business. Life is so much more than buying and selling and should never include the buying and selling of people. Instead, let us choose to live in Bakhita's world, a world where we do not need many possessions to be happy or to serve God. May we live in another economy, the economy of grace, for "without cost we have received; without cost we are to give."