

Homily

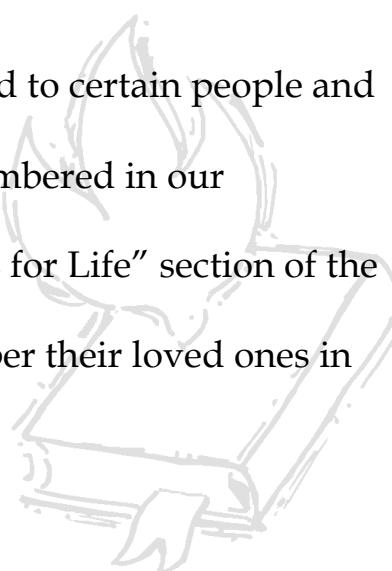
27th Sunday OT - C

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
October 05-06, 2025

Hb 1: 2-3; 2: 2-4
Ps 95: 1-2, 6-7, 8-9
2 Tm 1: 6-8, 13-14
Lk 17: 5-10

When I am celebrating these Masses in these beautiful churches, I look at the stained glass windows, statues and the crucifixes that have been built and donated by parishioners current and in past ages. I look at all of our pew donations offered by our parishioners within the last six years. Towards that cause, we have encountered a great number of people who have contributed so much for the building of these churches and the maintenance of our campuses. I think I have told you through pew donations alone, we have raised over \$250,000 from families who have dedicated in honor of loved ones, monies used to upkeep these churches to preserve them for future use.

The stained glass windows often are dedicated to certain people and families. We also have loved ones who are remembered in our respective grottos; we had to expand our “Bricks for Life” section of the grotto on behalf of so many that wish to remember their loved ones in



the community. One family upgraded our sound system at St. Patrick's, to the tune of \$40,000 in memory of Marlene LaMotte. Jim and Marlene LaMotte also contributed significant monies to upgrade our sound system on the first floor of our church for the sake of our Hispanic Choir and donated monies to install a Yamaha or organ in the balcony of the church because fixing the existing pipe organ would cost \$150,000 to renovate (and Lord knows how much it would cost to maintain).

For the moment we have a \$10,000 keyboard that we have connected to our sound system; 95% of our community would not know the difference between that and our pipe organ (and for those who have \$150,000 in loose change to fix our pipe organ, break open that piggy bank to make that impossible dream possible!).

In addition to all those donations where we recognize our faithful, we also have so many good souls in our parishes who do not have plaques in honor of their families who have done so many wonderful things quietly for the members of our Churches as well. I call their silent work that parallels Matthew 6: 1-4 the mission of the "invisible fingerprints" that make a significant difference in the lives around us as

well... so many people have done so many wonderful things in our parishes that we have not acknowledged and who wish to keep it that way.

I would like to offer but one example of someone who has given of their time and talent that quietly has made all the difference in the world to us. Robert Piquet from Vista Painting volunteered his over the last few months to learn from our octogenarian parishioner Joe Krauss how to tear down a decaying stucco set of walls in our sanctuary that were damaged from water leaking in our roof before we were able to repair that roof a year or so ago. When Joe had the energy a few years ago, he was able to rebuild and paint the stucco wall in our church balcony, destroyed from water damage from our roof. Teaching Robert the skills of repairing St. Patrick's walls, Robert and his son from Vista Painting tore down the corrupted walls in our sanctuary, rebuilt them and only charged us \$550 for the cost of our materials.

As I stated a couple homilies ago, Freddy Franco and a group of our parishioners dedicated themselves to clean both parish halls, both rectories and both churches on a monthly basis as part of their "Time &

Talent" to our communities. Many of these good souls do not wish to be recognized for what they are doing; some of them prefer not to be recognized. These good souls say to me, "We are going to make this cleaning our donation to the parishes, but please do not tell people that we are doing this because we want to do it from our hearts."

This last year, I was communicating with woman named Valerie, a former alumnus from St. Patrick's Church who currently lives in Scottsdale, AZ. When she was young, Valerie's father passed away and, according to what Valerie told me, her mother was not able to take care of the all her kids. As a result, Valerie's mother enrolled her kids at St. Patrick's Academy, which was a reasonably-priced boarding school at the time. Valerie graduated from the school in 1962, along with one of our "pillar community members" here at St. Patrick's named Joanne Hermann – Valerie and Joanne still communicate with each other frequently.

After her graduation, Valerie fell in love, got married and moved to Arizona. Her husband, Henry "Hank" Szopinski, died earlier this year at age 81. I promised Valerie that we would remember both Hank and

her in prayer our parishes. Valerie said to me she wants to give \$10,000 to the parish every single year as a “thank you” for what we have been able to do for her, her mother and her siblings, as well as everyone else in this community.

The bottom line is nobody’s going to remember Valerie. No one is going to remember Robert Piquet or Joe Kraus or all these other wonderful souls who have done all these nice things for our parishes. Even though we have the plaques on our windows and our statues and our crucifix and even on our pews, people from future generations eventually are going to forget about them as well... as they will with me and every other pastor that preceded me.

Each of us eventually will be forgotten... *but God never forgets.* God is God and knows that every single one of us is a “useless servant” who has only done what God has asked us to do (Luke 17: 10). We are unprofitable servants; we are only doing what God has asked us to do.

For the amount of time it takes for me to record, produce and upload these Masses and teachings online, I am well aware that few people are watching them, I keep reminding myself that primarily I am recording,

producing and uploading these Masses to tell God that I love him, that I wanted God to know that I care for him and that I care for all of you.

Whether people accept that or not, whether people disparage these Masses or even me for uploading these Masses is irrelevant.

What is relevant is I want to get to heaven; I want to live like God, even with my shortcomings. No matter what other people think about these Masses or of me, if I do what God asks me to do, then I have become as useless servant as those wonderful, “useless” Christians who have done before me. You all know that, metaphorically or otherwise, in five minutes after I am gone, no one is going to remember you are me except God... and that is all that counts.

For this reason and more, I keep thinking about all these individuals who have asked me to pray for them and offer them up at these Online Masses. I offer these Masses for all the other “useless servants” in the world who have done God’s will very quietly. To God, these good souls are not “useless.” To God, each of these souls are treasured gifts.

In earth we are called to humble ourselves. We have to make ourselves “useless servants” if we wish to follow God’s plan and,

subsequently allow God to carry all of us “useless servants” into heaven. We have to live like Christ who did the same thing for us, by becoming a useless servant infinitely more than we can ever imagine (see Philippians 2) and by doing so, revealing to us who he truly was.

The more we empty ourselves of our pride and our ego and all those capital sins, the more our hearts are ready to welcome God to lead us and guide us, knowing very well if we go back out into the world what awaits us. If we understand what it means to become a “useless servant in God’s name, then what awaits us in heaven is this presence of the divine who will continue to love us because God is just; God loves everyone, *especially* the sinner. God takes care of the sinners and the saints.

The way we get to heaven is to rid ourselves of pride over humility and allowing God to lead us and guide us. That emptiness (that *kenosis* in Greek) is to remind us that *without* God, we are nothing but *with* God, all things are possible. God knows that I do this because I love you dearly. I keep doing this because for those of you who are watching, you are that important. Even if you are not watching the videos I put on

YouTube, I still love you because that is what God asks me to do.

Every one of us “useless servants” who have been called not to lament like Habakkuk, not to lament about the destruction that will happen when we are not faithful to God, but rather focus on what happens when we *are* faithful and *are* loving. regardless of what the world think and sharing this love with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.