

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 21st 2015

Self-esteem and self-worth are interesting concepts. To some individuals these words go hand in hand with celebrity status and it is something they strive for. For them, gracing the cover of People magazine would likely be their crowning achievement. For others it might be being recognized by their peers as the best in their chosen field. But this type of fame is limited to few and it is fleeting as well.

So what are our options for assuring our own self-esteem if we know we will never grace the cover of People or win the Nobel Peace Prize? How do we elevate our own sense of self-worth? One tactic some of us employ is to tell our friends about our interactions with those who are famous. Or, is it the more subtle tact of a picture of you with a sports legend, politician or movie star on your office desk?

In conversations with friends do you slip in that over the weekend you were introduced to a celebrity, or that your closest friend is the closest friend of Mr. or Mrs. Famous? It is probably human nature that we all try to elevate our self-esteem and status by sharing with others the “celebrities” we know or we associate with.

But have you ever considered elevating your self-worth and self-esteem by saying to your friends that Jesus is your brother? I suspect for many of us the answer would be no. But today’s Gospel tells us just who are members of Jesus’ family when he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister and mother.”

So, if we really want to elevate our own image of self-worth maybe we should begin by talking not about celebrities we know or the accomplishments of our close friends or family members but by listening to how the Lord is calling us to be a lay apostle so we can do the will of our heavenly Father?

Does God want us to do more than just teach catechism or serve as a Eucharistic minister? Does he want us to extend our outreach to those in need beyond an organized event sponsored by our church at the local homeless shelter? As lay Catholics we need to “see without looking” all the endless opportunities for us to serve others and to do God’s will. (Remember, discernment is not just a term limited to those thinking about entering the religious life but rather a word that should be part of the vocabulary of each and every one of us listening to God’s personal call to serve him.) If we schedule time in our busy lives to hear God’s calling to us as lay Catholics and how we can serve the “will of my Father” we will never have any doubts about our self-worth. The self-worth that comes from serving others surely tops getting our picture on the cover of People magazine in my book and I am sure in your book too.

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