

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jul 19th 2024

Dancing before the Lord

Repetitively in the Gospels, Jesus is depicted as breaking the sacred law of the Sabbath, the rule to rest on the seventh day. For instance, he frequently heals on the Sabbath, much to the disapproval of the upholders of Jewish law. In today's Gospel, following his disciples' act of harvesting grain on the Sabbath, Jesus proclaims himself as the "Lord of the Sabbath." When only Yahweh could be given the title "Lord of the Sabbath," what is Jesus suggesting?

Jesus cited two instances from their history as documented in the scriptures to prove that their interpretation of the Law of Sabbath was wrong. The first was about David and his soldiers entering God's house and consuming the loaves of bread meant for God because they were hungry. This act was prohibited for anyone apart from the priests. Secondly, Jesus highlighted that the priests on temple duty not only worked on the Sabbath but also worked more than usual on that day, just as the priests do today on Sundays. Nonetheless, they are not accused of violating the Sabbath!

Today's Gospel passage highlights that Small-mindedness and legalism can easily infect our Catholic life. Obviously, our legalistic attitudes towards matters of faith are at the root of a lot of divisions in the Church.

The rubrics often take precedence, causing us to overlook the importance of showing love. At the Diocese's commissioning Mass for World Youth Day 2023, the delegates presented a dance within the church. Critics exclaimed, "Dancing is forbidden inside the church as it is a sacred place!" If our youth are not allowed to dance in front of God, where else can they express themselves in this manner? Our attendance at Mass would hold no value if we were unwilling to show forgiveness and compassion towards our fellow believers.

Biblie Claret