

HOMILY SUNDAY 09 – YEAR A (Homily 02)
(Doing God's Will)

Dt 10:12-13; 11:18, 26-28, 32; Ps 31; Rm 1:16-17; 3:20-26, 28; Mt 7:21-27)

A pilgrim from North America journeyed to Tibet on a search for a miracle. He heard of a guru living in a cave high up on a mountain and climbed all day to consult him. When asked by the guru why he came, he replied that he was looking for a miracle. The guru replied how strange it is that people in North America think it is a miracle when God responds to their will, while for people in Tibet it is a miracle whenever someone finally does God's will.

The readings today give us a clear message: do the will of God and follow the commands of the Lord.

The first reading from Deuteronomy puts it directly: *obey the commandments of the Lord your God; observe all the statutes and ordinances.*

In the gospel, the first thing we see is that Jesus and his disciples climb a high mountain where Jesus sits down to teach. Both these actions underline the importance of this teaching. Jesus then basically repeats the lesson from the first reading – do the will of God. He goes on to add that the way to do that is to know and live the scriptures. Doing the will of God and knowing and living the scriptures are compared to a householder building a house on a solid rock foundation. We are left with a double-edged message. We are to build our lives on the rock of God's Word and doing God's Will.

Jesus cautions us not to get distracted by our desire for the sensational. God's will is not necessarily found even in miracles, exorcisms, prophecies and superficial religiosity. God's will is simple and clear. We are to believe in Jesus Christ and obey his commands. We know that those commands are also simple and clear. Love God with our whole being, and love others as we love ourselves. Love even our enemies, and do good to those who hurt us. In the end, we are to forgive from the heart any hurt that has come our way.

Some of the ministry that Brother Tom Novak OMI is doing within the Archdiocese of Keewatin-The Pas is to go into isolated communities that have little pastoral presence, to work with and empower the people to truly be Church. He was preparing a group of youth for the sacraments of initiation and asked them how they were following Jesus. The youth, who were not that involved in Sunday

worship, responded that they were following Jesus when they managed to forgive anyone who had hurt them. Brother Tom was impressed by the maturity of their faith, even though they needed to grow in their involvement with the Church community.

St. Paul in the second reading adds a caution. We are made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, and not necessarily by the works that we do. Ideally, those should go together – faith in Jesus that is expressed in works of love and mercy. We arrive again at the same message. Believe in Jesus Christ and do his will. Build our lives on the rock of faith in Jesus and doing God's will.

The Eucharist that we celebrate now is certainly a living out of today's Gospel. We have gathered in faith to hear God's Word and to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. We are forgiven, healed and empowered to go out to help others grow in faith and fidelity to the will of God as taught to us by Jesus Christ.

So let us resolve as we celebrate today to truly put our faith in Jesus Christ and live by his commands. Let us build our lives on the foundation of the rock of God's Word and God's Will.