

5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Matthew 5:13-16

Facebook now has over 1.3 billion people signed up and half of them log in every day. In its own way it has made the world a smaller place and helped to connect people across neighbourhoods and nations. Pope Benedict XVI was a keen advocate of social media and the need for the Church to make use of tools such as Facebook and Twitter because he saw that these things were tools which could be used to make the unchanging message of Christ known to a changing world.

A few years ago a Catholic layman developed a version of Facebook which he called Digital Humanity or Dighu. A site which he based on the golden rule: do unto others what you would have them do unto you. Rather than recording personal achievements, people recorded what they had done for others. For example, people posted things like: “stopped to check on the inhabitants of a car that spun out,” or “covering the shift of a fellow employee on my off day,” or “washed the dishes without complaining.” It sought to act against pride, which is so often at the root of our sins. Pride causes us to promote ourselves even if it means lying, it causes us to put others down if it means we look better, it means judging our worth against the worth of others, and it causes us to neglect others. What Dighu tried to do was to encourage others to act outside of themselves for the sake of others by encouraging others to do what they know they should be doing.

In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah the Lord gives a whole list of things we should be doing: feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, donating our possessions such as our clothes to those who need them more. We call this social justice, but social justice has, unfortunately, taken on a life of its own. I say unfortunately because so often things are done in the name of social

justice which neglect the teachings of Christ or have no orientation to Christ at all but become based on a humanism which, ironically, does everything possible to undermine humanity such as promoting acts which are absolutely contrary to the teachings of Christ. When St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said he spoke so that their faith would be reliant upon the power of God and not some human philosophy. In other words, what he taught and what he encouraged them to do was to live a life of faith and to act in accordance with that faith for the glory of God. In other words, it is using what God has given to us, whether it be food or clothing or money or intelligence or even social networking to aid others for their salvation which is the glory of God.

For our parish of Holy Cross we have taken to hear the words of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis and sought to use these social media tools for the glory of God and for the salvation of His people. It is a means to draw people to the Church by promoting the good works, both liturgical and social, of our parish and a place for people to find short prayers which they can pray daily. It has become a means of evangelisation and a way to draw people closer to Our Lord, to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints.

So look around to see what you have whether it be money or skills or even your social media and think about how can you use these God-given tools for the salvation of humanity and the glory of God.