

Homily - September 22, 2020

By Fr. Virgil Petermeier, osc

We gather this morning to celebrate God's word and outpouring love, so that our love pours out in all our actions and behavior. We know that our attitudes or actions do not always reflect God's life and love-giving word, and so we confidently call upon our compassionate God.

"Like a stream is the king's heart in the hand of the Lord:" The first reading and responsorial Psalm indicate that a heart in the hand of the Lord is a heart which flows out to neighbor in need and to the poor. That heart flows with truth and with simplicity of heart. Wow! What a wonderful image of the heart. It is a stream which flows with the BEST. I once looked at our Crosier cross and imagined it to be eight streams flowing with Christ's love and mercy. In a symbolic fashion this Crosier cross calls me to let my heart flow with the BEST for others, creation and myself. So, we join our psalmist today, who says, "Guide me, Lord, in the way of your commands." In other words, "Make my heart flow with goodness."

Today, the three-verse Gospel is so simple and so to-the-point. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it." So hearing the word of God should prompt us to pour out our heart in concrete ways that are in accord with God's word.

Acting on the word is essential. That includes real **deeds** for the sake of the poor and to do what is best and just for our neighbor; to speak the truth, so that no one is prompted or feels the need to have to do fact checking because they know when one is really dedicated to truth. Acting on the word also includes choosing a Christ-like **attitude** – an attitude of compassion, a style of life of simplicity, and a presence filled with humility rather than arrogance.

The result of hearing God's word and acting it out brings about a wonderful result. We become family—of Jesus and of one another. Repeatedly and regularly hearing and acting on God's word make us a family of one mind and heart, as St. Augustine, our community father, calls us to be. In fact, Jesus intimates that we may become a stronger family of sisters and brothers than in our family of origin, when we bravely and faithfully hear God's word and live it out. By doing so, we become inspirations for one another; we affirm and encourage one another.

Jesus said, "My mother and my brothers [and sisters] are those who hear the word of God and act on it."