

Fr. Elizier Dorescat's Homily at St. Michael Church, Glen Allen, Virginia

August 28-29, 2010

Father Dan, Father Jim, Deacon Andy, Deacon Kurt, Deacon Frank

My brothers and sisters in Christ, our Lord ...

Jesus in the Gospel today gives us a lesson in humility. He asks us not to seek the best places at feasts, but rather to take the last place. Yet in all societies, there is the race for top spots. What matters is to get the coveted position, to promote myself and to get a place in the leadership class. This is the logic of self-affirmation, the logic of individual and collective egotism.

Instead of this world of strong competition, Jesus offers the logic of the kingdom of God. He tells us that the search for top positions will never build the new society ordained by God. The clever people who can capture the first places in this world are the ones that Jesus calls the sons of darkness. We who are the sons of light, we must live in humility in order to find favor with God.

"He who humbles himself will be exalted", Jesus said. We are not asked to be humble for humility's sake. For God is not pleased to see us humbled. But he knows that it is in making us slaves, servants who are ready to do everything required by the service of the gospel, that we are lead to Christ. It is in doing everything required to serve our brothers and sisters that we are lead to Christ.

"He who humbles himself will be exalted." This is not an arbitrary requirement. He wants to tell us about the demands of love. To love is to will good, to do good, to give of ourselves, to share his life. If all our life is organized to serve ourselves, it will be difficult to truly love. Surprisingly, the more we are close to last place, the easier it will be for us and our lives will be more likely to be successful in God's eyes.

What Jesus tells us in the gospel today is not to take advantage of a situation that gives us an advantage, but to have the desire to serve others. And, if we happen to be in the advantageous position, to use our position to better serve others.

Because of your actions over the past seven years, I see that you are a people humble of heart. You have made yourselves the servants of others, helping them socially, economically and spiritually. You have given me concrete evidence that shows the greatness of God in you.

Therefore, I believe that if Mother Nature was talking for me at this moment, she would be telling you how deeply you have touched me. You would hear it in the beating of my heart.

From June 2003 until now, the faithful of St. John the Baptist Parish in Dos Palais have never ceased to be beneficiaries of your generosity, your gestures of heart. All this testifies to the great love that burns in your hearts for the Church of Christ, for the

Haitian people and especially for the people of Dos Palais. In the name of that love, you helped my people believe that they are human beings created in the image and likeness of God. You helped my people believe that they are Christian persons that have value and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

You have contributed greatly to the development of Saint John the Baptist Parish in Dos Palais, Haiti:

- sometimes in education with a new school and by sponsoring the children or by collecting coins for the school at St. Mark's chapel.
- sometimes in the social sphere with a rectory for me to live in, by repairing the road into the village and with the drinking water project; water being a gospel symbol of life.
- sometimes in terms of economic development with programs like the micro-credit program and the goat program.
- sometimes in the spiritual area with a beautiful new church, a witness of your faith and the faith of my people.
- I should also mention your generosity after the earthquake that helped me provide food to the children and the poor people from Port-au-Prince who fled to my parish.

Thanks to you, Dos-Palais has become a landmark in the Diocese of Hinche. Thanks to you, Dos-Palais continues to surprise people who come to pray at the foot of the tabernacle of Christ. Thanks to you everyone is talking about "the Cathedral of Dos-Palais" and not the Church of Dos-Palais. Dear supporters, more than friends, you are for us a family. Be sure that the people of Dos-Palais and I are very grateful to you.

Your efforts, your works, speak for you. They say in capital letters what you appear to believe: that an ounce of action is better than all the speeches in the world. Let me tell you that without you, without your participation and collaboration, Dos-Palais would not be what it is today. You gave us four basic things which will remain etched in the minds of children, youth and adults of Dos-Palais, from generation to generation: School, Water, Church and Rectory. Be assured that we take great care of them so they will continue to serve the people of Dos-Palais for many, many years to come.

I will finish now. But first, in thanksgiving for all that you are for us, the people of Dos-Palais and I would like to give you a gift. This gift is two small words, but they overflow directly from our hearts:

"Thank you"

Know that wherever we are, we always carry you in our hearts and prayers, because you help us to understand the true meaning of sharing, the true meaning of love.

May God in whom we both believe, continue to fill you with his grace, his kindness, and continue making you witnesses of his love! Thank you, thank you, and thank you very much!