

It not fair, I spent almost an entire week with books spread all over my office, ideas written on paper, just to get the homily ready for this weekend. I missed a great Brewer game Tuesday night that I had tickets for, because I still had not had my homily written. Then just as I thought I had everything down that I wanted to say my son Craig comes up to me all excited and tells me a story. After I heard it I tossed most of what I already had out. It's just not fair!!

Craig had gone to a youth seminar with our new youth minister Karley Pennings and told me the story from a book that he had gotten from one of the speakers about three teenagers 2 boys and a girl who were leaders in their youth group. Now one of the boys was going out with a girl that the other boy also wanted to go out with. The second boy spread many stories around about the other so that eventually the couple broke up and soon after the second boy started going out with the girl. There were many hard feelings between the once good friends that it started to affect others in the youth group.

The youth minister seen this and called them all into his office to see if there was some way work this out before the entire youth group collapsed. As the youth minister started to talk with them and explain his concerns for them and the youth group the first boy said that before they went on he needed to get something from his car. After he had left the youth minister started to get thoughts in his mind about

what he gone to get. What was the boy going to do? Was he getting a knife or a gun? What had the boy planned on doing?

As the boy walked back into the office, he held his hands behind his back, so the others could not see what he had. He started to address the boy who had told the untrue stories about him and how badly he had hurt him with his actions. All the while holding his hands so no one in the room could see what he had behind his back. The others in the room were getting nervous as the boy walked over to a table and grabbed a bottle of water. He started to walk over by the other boy and told him he wanted to forgive him but the only way he knew how....as he slowly started to move his other hand from behind his back...and showed him the towel he was holding....., was to wash his feet.

It was this story that really opened my eyes to the readings for this weekend and really fit in with the question of the week. In Paul's letter he tells the Philippians "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus." The action this young man took certainly took on the attitude of Christ.

The Psalm today also caught my attention as I pray this many times in my own words. Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me. I have come to realize that the actions of Jesus and others around me speak much more loudly than the words spoken.

I have said many times God's ways are not our ways, and God's sense of timing is wholly different from our own. We like to stick to a schedule to certain actions like: baptism shortly after birth. But do we continue to act on giving the child the chance to know about God and the faith as they grow older?

We like first communion by third grade. But do we ourselves continue to take action to find a way to come to Mass every week, even when we are on vacation or have to work on the weekends and to show the child the importance of this action in our own lives? We have confirmation in high school thinking great I am finally finished with my religious education when in fact it is only the beginning.

God visits us when he wills. Each sacrament is a "yes" to God's invitation to a life of grace, but it may be many years before it matures into a whole-hearted commitment to God's word. And, we know how frequently that initial "yes" gets lost in the demands of everyday life. Like the religious leaders challenged by Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel (Mt.21:28-32), we can say "yes" right on schedule but fail to recognize the gift of salvation visiting us in the "fullness of time".

As a community, we are blessed by those who, go through the sacramental rites of passage "out of order", whether it be those in our RCIA programs or those who come to be married in the Church after many years of civil marriage. Or returning Catholic's who are bring their children into a faith they once knew themselves and are now relearning or seeing in a different way.

Their actions remind us both of the gravity and the joy of taking those first steps toward full communion with God's People. They challenge us to take the "yes" we spoke many years ago out of our trophy case, polish it up and put it back on display.

God uses them to challenge us to put our words of faith into action to go into His vineyard to continue his work on earth. So this week's question is a good one. "What beliefs do you hold that require some action on your part, in order to make them believable to you and to others?"

So was God unfair to me this week? Perhaps not because compared to what actions God has planned for all of us this week, what I would have had to say would have been pretty boring.