

A lady went to the post office to mail a Bible to an old friend. She wrote on the box the warning “Fragile!” The postal clerk asked, “Is there anything breakable in here?” “Yes,” she replied. “It contains the Ten Commandments”.

Sin is always a violation of God’s commandments. It practically means saying no to God. The two sons in the parable disobeyed the father. The first son said ‘no’, but later decided to obey his father. The second son said ‘yes’, but did not do what his father told him to do. In effect, it was also a ‘no’. Both of them offended the father. The ‘yes’ of the second son, though it initially pleased the father, was rendered meaningless by his disobedience. The ‘no’ of the first son hurt the father, but his subsequent repentance and obedience made the father happy in the end. Ultimately, it is not the words that really matter but the deed. Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21).

“Actions speak louder than words.” In fact, there is no need for words when there are actions. So, when we do not do what we say, as in the case of the second son, our words lose credibility. Hence, it can be said: “Your actions are too loud that I cannot hear your words.”

There is a story about an elderly gentleman. He had serious hearing problem for many years. He went to a very competent doctor, and he was given an amazing set of hearing aids that fully restored his hearing faculty. After a month, he went back to his doctor. The doctor was pleased: “Your hearing is perfect! Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.” The gentleman replied, “Oh, I haven’t told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to their conversations. I’ve revised my last will three times already.”



The parable of Jesus this Sunday was intended for the religious leaders of Israel in His time, particularly the Pharisees. In their self-righteousness, they believe they are assured of entrance into heaven. But Jesus told them: “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you” (Mt 21:31). They are the religious leaders who have clearly expressed their ‘yes’ to God. But based on their behavior and attitude, their hypocrisy and pride, their lack of concern for the people and their double-standard lifestyle, they have actually disobeyed God’s will and commands. They are like the second son in the parable.

On the other hand, the tax collectors, prostitutes, and other public sinners can be like the first son. They said ‘no’ to God, but eventually, they listened to the teachings of Jesus, and reformed their lives. This is what the prophet Ezekiel pointed out in the first reading: “But if the wicked turn from the wickedness they did and do what is right and just, they shall save their lives; since they turned away from all the sins they committed, he shall live; they shall not die” (Ez 18:27-28).

Between the two sons, which of them should we follow? The answer comes from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: we follow neither the first son, nor the second son. Rather, we follow the third son: the one who said “yes” and obeyed the will of the heavenly Father even unto death. He is Jesus Christ. So, Saint Paul exhorts us: “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5).

In this context and in the context, we celebrate Respect life Sunday, I invite you to listen and say yes to the Voice of God. As Dcn. Kevin mentioned in his homily whether you are Republican or Democratic, we are called to be Christians. As Christians we believe God has created us in his own image. And again, in Gen 1,27



we read “God Created man in His image, in the Divine Image, he created him; male and female he created them.” So, when a male and female become one, forming the divine image they are participating in the creation of God. The result of their love is not the creation of any individual person there. It is the creation of God. And God has commanded us to care all his creation. And so, in this case there is no question of individuals’ freedom or rights, because as I mentioned it is not the creation of any individual there. Think of it in the light of divine Voice. As we approach the November Election forget about all political voices and your own voices, listening to the Voice of God take the right decision.

Dear friends, being a Christian is an infinitely great privilege and honor for us. We become God’s children and inheritors of the heavenly kingdom. But being a Christian does not consist only of receiving honor and privileges. It has also its corresponding duties and responsibilities, and these are fulfilled not by talking but by doing, not by words but by action. One time when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, someone told him: “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you.” But Jesus looked around and asked, “Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said: “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother to me” (Mt. 12:48-50). It is in doing and obeying God’s will that makes us true brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Words do not mean anything when they are not accompanied by actions. Worse, our words lose their value when our actions contradict them. Nobody will believe our words anymore.



In baptism, we all said our ‘yes’ to God. Every time we come to church, we dip our fingers in the holy water and make the sign of the cross on ourselves. This we do as a renewal of our ‘yes’ to God in baptism. But that is not enough. In fact, it is meaningless if we do not support it with actions. Let us make sure our ‘yes’ to God is seen in our actions, behavior, and obedience to His commands. And this we have to do every day for the rest of our lives. Then we become like the third son, Jesus Christ, who was obedient to the Father even to death on the cross.