

Doing Our Duty

Do everything without grumbling or questioning . . .

Philippians 2:14

This sounds so simple. Yet the problem is that unless your heart is truly into whatever daunting task lies ahead, most ___ look for an excuse to worm our way out of it if the conditions are not to our liking.

We in this Catholic Community are very much aware of the two main charity events we are a huge part of; the Walk-For-Hunger that is held every May, and the Toys For Tots walk every October, two worthy causes that are very much near and dear to our hearts. In recent years, thousands upon thousands of dollars have been raised and donated to those in most need of our assistance. And when it's all said and done, we feel good about ourselves because we did what we were called upon to do as good Christians. And to reiterate this point, I looked at Luke 17:10 When you have been commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do."

What, then, does it mean to think of oneself as an "unprofitable servant"? Most likely, Jesus is simply trying to get his disciples to understand that true humility is about telling the truth. If we simply do as we are supposed to do, that's good. But when we don't, then that's not so good. Case in point;

Last month, on October 14th, we were ready to go for the Toys For Tots walk. The weather leading up to that Saturday was supposed to have been cold with heavy rain at times. Deacon Artie informed us that if it rained out, we would postpone the event until the following Saturday. But on the morning of the 14th, the sun was shining and it was all systems go. The team members gathered in the prison yard bright and early and set things up for the day. As is our custom, we gathered in prayer and thanked our Lord and Savior for Blessing us with good weather to do His work. The prayer ended with a quote from Proverbs, She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. 31:20

Frankie Quinn, Joe Lab and I took off early to get a head start on the rest of the field that would be joining us on the track at the 9:00a.m. movement. When the track is not crowded, I can push Joe's chair much faster without having to move around people as much. Our goal was to do twenty-miles in the allotted time.

As the morning wore on, I was in my cruise mode, listening to the radio and accumulating milage when I heard Joe yell something to me over his shoulder. I asked him to repeated it. He said;

"Where is everybody?" I had not really paid much attention to how many others were on the track with us until Joe spoke up. Both Frankie and I looked around and there were not that many others out there with us. Maybe twenty-five or thirty, but not nearly as many men out there walking or running as there usually is when we hold these events. So I thought maybe more will come out and join us at the 10:00a.m. movement, but it was not to be. The crowd stayed about the same, ~~and~~ soon there after, I once again heard;

"Where the hell is everyone?" And there was an edge to his voice. Joe was not happy. Granted, the weather conditions were not ideal, yet they weren't horrific either, and more men should have been out there. At 11:00a.m., we stopped over at the team service table where Timmy Muise, Artie and several others were manning the money donation slips, the laps being walked and the water for those who might need it. I asked Timmy how much they had collected thus far. He told me \$10.00, and that the reason it was so low was that most of the men who came out to walk had already previously donated money. Still, that seemed like an unusually low number to be collected for two hours in the morning.

So we went inside for the mid-day count and resumed our trek at 12:30 in the afternoon, a half an hour ahead of the rest of the 1:00p.m. movement. The weather had not improved, as a matter of fact, it started to get worse. I asked Joe if he still wanted to go out and finish because more than likely we were gonna get rained on. For a man who has severe C.O.P.D. and issues with his lungs in the wet, cold weather, I cannot imagine that another two and a half hours outside would be good for his health. After expressing this to Joe, for the second time, he once again told me that we are going to go back out and finish what we started. We are going to do what we

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committed ourselves to do and finish this thing for the kids who are counting on us to get them toys for the holidays.

And that's what we did. Not even an hour into the walk, the rain came, but not too bad. Timmy and his crew braved the elements as a smattering of men showed up for the afternoon portion of our event. I could hear Joe telling Frankie that he was getting pissed as we cruised around a mostly empty track that more of the men who had committed to walk and raise money did not show up at all.

When it was over, the three of us were the only ones out of 79 official walkers and runners who completed the full twenty miles.

As a community, we raised over a thousand dollars for the Toys For Tots, that all of us know will be put to good use by the U.S. Marines. Our lives bring us many joys, but sometimes they also bring challenges that leave us anxious and confused, even lazy or indifferent. At such times, if we need help, and we know we need help, then simply ask for it, because truth be told, God wants to give it to you, and will. When Joe, Frankie and I looked back on that day, we all knew in our hearts that God was with us, getting us through the difficult legs of our journey, helping to navigate successfully through the storm. Just like He does in our lives. We've realized time and time again that God has shown us His Grace and care and that brings us all hope for the future too. So, if God has been so good in the past, won't He be with me, with Joe, with Frankie, with you through all the challenges yet to come? Think about that.

And now go back to the "unprofitable **servant**" aspect that I wrote about earlier. What it means is that we admit to ourselves and others that we have simply done what we are supposed to do. No heroics, no groveling, no excuses. End of discussion.

Most people in our Community like to think of themselves as reasonably good people doing the best that we can. That may be true, but it may not be enough. Sometimes, we need to dig deep to discover that we can improve upon things in our lives that may need improving.

A prayer to the Holy spirit could help us all make the move.