

What's in it for me?

Tell joke about frog and geese. There was once a brilliant frog who desperately wished that he could leave his pond and see the world. One day he noticed some Canada Geese flying overhead in their VEE formation and he thought with his brilliant mind, if two of the geese would hold a stick between them in their beaks, I could hang on to the stick my strong mouth and fly away with them. Eventually some geese landed in his pond and he got his chance to ask. "Sure we'll do that" they said. So off they flew a stick in their beaks and the frog hanging between them. A farmer just happened to look up and see the unusual sight and he said out loud. "Hmmm, I wonder who thought that up?" The frog couldn't contain himself and said, "I didddddddd!"

Pride goeth before a fall (Proverbs 16: 18) It's easy to see the wisdom and the logic in that Proverb. It's easy to see where Jesus is coming from in his teaching from today's Gospel. But, sometimes it is nice to receive a little recognition isn't it? The problem develops when we begin to think we are not getting the recognition we deserve.

We are all familiar with stories of famous movie stars, or public figures that cause trouble when they are not treated the way they think they should be treated and they ask the stereo-typical question, "Don't you know who I am?" As Jesus pointed out, it is much better to be treated with more respect than you feel you deserve, than to go into a situation expecting to receive more than you are going to get....

Does that mean that we should no want to be wealthy? No it means that our striving for wealth should be for the

purpose of doing the work of God instead of providing for our own comfort.

John Wesley had an interesting perspective on the idea of wealth...He said work as hard as you can as long as you can, and make all the money you can. Then give as much money away as you can. And we shouldn't be concerned about whether or not we are recognized for our efforts in this life.

What would our church look like if we really put all of our effort into making as much money as we could for the purpose of giving as much as we could away? Wouldn't we be more like Jesus if we could do that? Jesus, the one we worship and believe in was rich and became poor so that he could save us from ourselves. We often forget that about him, but it's true. Jesus gave up his divinity and became human so that we fellow humans could someday become divine like him. So when we give away the thing that makes us wealthy and powerful, we are doing what Jesus did.

Our ministry should be directed to those who cannot repay us. Our church has a caring fund which I am charged with watching over and using to help those in need. If I only gave it to people who could pay it back, then I am no different than a bank. May God grant that all of us can someday have the experience of having more than we need...I know many of us will never know that kind of wealth in this life, but with belief in Jesus Christ, we will know the joy of salvation in the next life. For now, let us do what we can to please God with the effort, and strive to be humble. It will be much better for us to be surprised to be with Jesus in paradise, then to think that we somehow deserve to be there.