**26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 27, 2026**

World Day of Migrants and Refugees: Pope Francis in his 2018 message prayed for our shared response “to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate”.

Ezekiel 18:25-28 - It is possible to turn from sin and preserve one’s life.

Philippians 2:1-11 - Be like Christ who humbled himself and was exalted by God.

Matthew 21:28-32 - Seeing God Clearly.

**When We Don’t Know Our Creator, Insecurity Takes Over:** Jesus tells a story of two sons: one says no but later changes his mind and goes; the other says yes but doesn’t. Jesus poses a pointed, direct question: Which son did what the father wanted? All would agree that “actions speak louder than words” and that even if his words were disobedient, the son who did the work as ordered by the father did the father’s will. Jesus questions why the chief priests and elders, who speak most often about God, did not respond to John the Baptist's message of repentance with a change of heart.

Friends, this passage goes beyond obedience and disobedience; this passage is more about identity. The son who refuses at first might be acting out of insecurity: he does not seem to trust his father’s heart; he does not seem to know the One who created him.

The son who says “yes” but never goes might also be insecure: he performs the part of a son but does not seem to live as a son. When we don’t know the One who created us, we don’t know who we are — and insecurity takes over. We say the right things but do not live them. We avoid the vineyard because we fear failing. We settle for appearances instead of conversion. A blurry image of God creates a blurry self-image, and a blurry self-image always hesitates.

**Jesus Brings the Father Into Focus:** Our past does not have to determine our future. The mistakes we have made do not have to become our identity. The sins we have committed do not have to have the final word over our lives (Lessons from Ezekiel 18:25-28). Jesus tells this parable to reveal the Father’s heart. The Father is not looking for perfect performance. God, our Father is looking for real sons and daughters who trust Him enough to enter the vineyard. He is patient with hesitation. He is merciful with failure. He is more interested in conversion than appearances. When the Father comes into focus, insecurity loosens. We stop pretending. We stop performing. We stop hiding behind “yes” or “no.” We start living from identity, children who know the Father and trust His voice.

**Scripture Restores the Identity We Lost:** If insecurity comes from not knowing our Creator, then Scripture restores that knowledge. Every time we open the Bible, the Father becomes clearer, and when the Father becomes clearer, our own identity in God becomes clearer. Matthew chapter 21 shows us a God who invites, who waits, who calls again, who loves, and who rejoices

when His children finally step up into the vineyard. Once we see who God is, we stop scrambling for worth and start living the identity He already gave us. The clearer God becomes, the clearer we become.

**A Story - Misreading Ourselves Without Our Creator:** A man once lived believing he was unreliable and disappointing. Every memory, every failure, every missed chance, told him the same story. Because he didn't know the One who created him, insecurity filled the space where identity should have been. Then someone handed him a copy of the Bible and said, "Read this until you see God clearly." As he read, God came more into focus: patient, welcoming, relentless in mercy and love. Once he saw who God is, he finally understood who he is. The Bible/Scripture restored his identity, and he walked into the vineyard with greater confidence.

**Why This Matters Now:** The gospel story today is not about which son is better. It is about which son knows the Father. The one who finally goes into the vineyard is the one who trusts the Father enough to act. Accepting and living the vocation of the priesthood, for me, remains an act of daily trusting God, who calls and who leads me. It has been a road paved with joy, blessings, uncertainties, and challenges. I believe that goes with many people as we follow Christ as parents, teachers, ministers, with every act of our 'YES' to God. True identity of who God is leads to acceptance, leads to saying 'YES', leads to obedience, while insecurity leads to hesitation, doubt, and disobedience. God is not simply looking for a verbal "yes." He is looking for a life that daily says "yes." Today, Jesus invites us to see the Father clearly so we can live our true identity in God confidently. How do we achieve that? We can do this only by reading the Bible.

Do you want to know Jesus better? Then study the Bible.

Do you desire a deeper knowledge of God? Study the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament)

Do you care for a deeper dive into the heart and mind of God? Study the holy book.

Do you want to experience the power of prayer, the power of God who answers prayers? Study the Bible.

Do you want to know about the passion of Christ, the mercy and love of God? Take the Bible and read.

Do you want clarity, confidence, or a deeper sense of who you are in God? Take some time and read the Bible.

My honest tip is to read it bit by bit. Don't be in a hurry to read it all. It might seem boring, sometimes harsh, too time-consuming, and even unreal. I must tell you, it is worth the whole time in the world! There are some online Bible study groups, like Fr. Mike Schmitz podcast. One can study the Bible on their own. There is a group of men here at St. Pius X, who gather to pray

and to study the Bible after the last Mass on Sundays. The point is, when we do not know the entire Bible story, we do not know the God behind the Bible. Bible study helps to fix that. When we see the whole story of God's pursuit of His people, we begin to see our own identity in God.

Our second text today (Philippians 2:1-11) tells us that Christ's humility as the obedient Son of God exalted Him and made Him the recipient of universal adoration. Christ did not merely speak about obedience; He lived it. He emptied Himself. He humbled Himself. He became obedient.

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, Christ made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father". (Philippians 2: 5-11) Amen.

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