

FOR THE GOOD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

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THE WILL OF GOD

On March 20, I gave a Lenten reflection to the men and women of the various religious orders and congregations serving our Diocesan Church. It took place at the friary chapel of the T.O.R. Franciscans in Loretto. While giving lengthy talks is not one of my favorite things to do, I did enjoy being with our consecrated religious. They, in turn, affirmed me by saying that the afternoon was good for them, as well.

The chapel is connected to the friary where a number of retired friars live. During my presentation, several of them came in and out of the chapel to pray. Early on in the afternoon, Brother Stanislaus raised his hand and asked how does one know the will of God. Not wishing to have the thought process interrupted for the rest of the group, I asked that he ask his question later during the question and answer period. He, then, left the chapel.

I have had regrets ever since. You see, Brother Stanislaus died that night, without receiving an answer from me. Ever since, I have had a few questions of my own. Why did he want to know at this specific time? Did he know that he was to present himself to the Lord that very night? I take some solace in knowing that he now has a better answer to the question than any that I could have given him. Having learned of his humble nature as a Franciscan Brother, I believe that he could have taught me a thing or two about the will of God in ones own life.

How does one know the will of God for oneself? Since it is not usually all that clear, I do know that a person has to discern with honesty and truth.

Monsignor Romano Guardini, a renowned theologian and writer, reminds us that the will of God is not a matter of our receiving daily “marching orders.” He goes further by saying that God’s will is not ready-made within us. Rather, it is something that is constantly being renewed and making ever-new demands on us as a person. Rather than receiving a command issued by a sovereign to his subject, it is more like the personal claim that a father or mother has on a son or daughter.

That makes sense, considering the fact that we are God’s sons and daughters by adoption through the Sacrament of Baptism, - not just creatures but sons and daughters of a loving God. Loved children want to please their parents. They know what to do. There is something within them that prompts them. They do not have to be given orders at the beginning of each day.

In actuality, it is a way of life that comes from within. If we are overly concerned about pleasing God simply by doing things and neglect our becoming the very person that pleases him, we will have missed the proverbial boat.

I surmise that Brother Stanislaus understood that truth but may have needed confirmation. He may have learned his lessons at the bench of his cobbler shop. However, he knew that living the will of God has to do with our relationship with others and not just resoling shoes.

My prayer is that, as Brother Stanislaus faced the Lord, he would have been told that he actually had it all put together. I also pray that Brother Stanislaus would have answered by asking the Lord to send an angel in order to enlighten the bishop that did not answer his question.