

## SEPTEMBER 2 FATHER BERTAIO

### **\*\*Very Quick Question\*\***

A very quick question. Are you the type of person who easily gets angry, no matter what the situation might be? I've been told many times that when someone gets angry, they tend to block out the good around them and, even more so, to block out God's love. Not a good thing.

Was that the case, then, perhaps with the people of the synagogue when they heard Jesus read from the scroll and proclaim that the prophecy, after many, many centuries of being read, finally had been fulfilled through the words of Jesus? Were they maybe so close to the human Jesus that they could not see his divinity? Their eyes and their faith were shut.

The anger of the people blocked their faith in Jesus to recognize him for who he really is—truly the only begotten Son of God.

In the first reading, St. Paul is almost boasting about his mission in proclaiming God's kingdom until he admits, and I quote, "I, Paul, came in weakness and in fear," humbly so, just like Jesus. In weakness, but not in fear—in great faith. Paul did it with fear, humbly so.

Perhaps because of the great responsibility that Paul had been given by Christ himself to proclaim the kingdom of God, thus we should do it with humility and fear, no matter what. The very, very serious responsibility that he was entrusted with is one that we preachers have as well.

And speaking of responsibility, on another side of the coin, this is ministry, not a job; it's ministry. But today, as I said at the beginning of Mass, we celebrate Labour Day in North America. This reminds me of a couple of things.

First, that, yes, for us in North America, summer is almost over. Not a bad thing. The fall comes, with beautiful leaves. Secondly, and most important of all, we are to give thanks and honor those who have the gift of having a job. Those who do so many things in their lives to serve humanity.

For example, the people who clean our streets, our sidewalks, and our parks. Never forget, and first of all, so important, the first responders, such as the ambulance drivers, the firefighters, and the law enforcement officers, who risk their lives every day to keep us safe.

How about those who serve meals in a restaurant? Those who wash the dishes? Those who serve us with a smile on their face, and sometimes not a smile on their face? One group that's very, very close to me is the parents—those who look after their children, who educate them. They are the first educators, the best educators. It's not a job; it's a ministry that they perform with great love and faith.

Another group that's also very close to me is the PSWs, or personal support workers—those who look after our seniors. In my case, my parents were looked after by my mom, who helped her when I couldn't be there.

I ask you, then, if you could please take some time during the day, as you sit back and relax, whatever it might be, to just pause for a moment and think of what you did in your life when you were able to do so, even if you have a job now. Just stop, pause for a moment, and give thanks to God for the ability to do something to help humanity and, of course, to help yourself make a living as well. What you do for others in the name of Christ is something you do for your salvation.

Perhaps you may be getting a little money here and there, perhaps gaining a little favor—whatever it might be—but do it with great love and great joy, because life is so, so short.

Speaking of life being short, you can make a difference. I quote the almost-saint, soon-to-be saint Carlo Acutis: "Sadness is looking at ourselves; happiness is looking towards God." (Chuckling) I'll repeat: "Sadness is looking at ourselves; happiness is looking towards God and smiling, knowing that one day we're going to see Him face-to-face."

The other quote that I really enjoy, and again it relates to you and me here on this Earth, is: "To always be close to Jesus. That is my life plan." When we're close to Christ, we know that we're not alone. Serving others shows us we're not alone. When we're in joy, when we're at peace, we know we're not alone. We are on our way to Heaven, whenever that might be. Just don't rush it.

What's your plan in life? What is the road that you are taking in life for your own journey to gain eternal life? My point is don't get upset. It's not worth it. Don't be upset, just relax. Anger and frustration are a waste of time, and they block God, the Holy Spirit, from being with you. It's a waste of energy. It's a waste of time.

Instead, let God into your life. Please let Him in and get rid of the other stuff. Open to God's grace and be amazed at how much you can accomplish, if not in this world, then in the kingdom of Heaven. But it starts here today.

So, when you do get into the kingdom, hopefully we'll see each other there. We can practice our faith with great joy, love, and tranquility.

In the meantime, enjoy your journey. Make it good. Make it peaceful. You are worth it. Amen.