

## Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Two young novice monks had not yet renounced their addiction to cigarettes, so the first one approached the Abbot: "May I smoke while I pray?" The Abbot said no.

So that same novice was startled to see his friend smoking the next day, AND to learn that the Abbot had given permission.

"You have to know how to phrase it," the friend said, laughing. "You asked if you could smoke while you pray. I asked if I could pray while I smoked."

Dear Friends,

In life, I am sure you have met people who only prefer their way of doing things. Such as always going the more scenic route instead of using today's superhighways. In their mind old highways are better, more leisurely and less traffic.

Many things affect our attitudes, including the environment we were brought up in and our individual experiences. Our personalities and values play a large role in our attitudes as well. The important thing to remember about attitudes is that they can change over time. Usually, some sort of positive experience needs to occur for our attitudes to change dramatically for the better. We also have control of our attitudes in our thoughts. If we constantly stream negative thoughts, it is likely we may become a negative person.

Today's readings bring us to analyze our attitude and have the attitude and mindset of Christ.

The gospel today is a parable about the contrasting attitudes of two sons. The first son said 'no' but after he came to his senses, he did his father's wish. The second son said 'Yes' but later, he did nothing. The question is asked and the answer is given for the first one.

Originally this parable refers to the refusal of the chief priests to recognize John the Baptist as a messenger of God. A good number of sinners converted because of John's preaching and they confessed their sins. Such people were well disposed to receive the message of Jesus. They were the tax collectors and sinners. The chief priests and scribes were indifferent in their attitude towards Jesus and in His preaching.

The first reading from the book of Ezekiel tells us about individual responsibility. The people were under the impression that the concept of culpability for parent's sins was being placed upon the shoulders of their children. Ezekiel says, which I agree, that each person is responsible for an individual relationship with God and is held accountable for sinful or virtuous conduct.

God is a gatherer, not a scatterer.

We have a beautiful second reading, which says exactly how our attitude needs to be like that of Christ. In Philippians 2:5 we read, "The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had." Saying yes to His heavenly father and humbled Himself totally to the point of death on the cross.

Let us have the same attitude of Christ. Let us avoid the mindset traps.