

## **Our Call to Live the Gospel and Our Nation's Values**

by Phil Marcin, OPA

Remember when Jesus began his public ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, his home town, he said: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners." And then there was Matthew 25, the Last Judgment, where he said, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me." He calls each of us to do the same.

Now these words from our Declaration of independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." And then these words at the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me."

We have a sacred responsibility: Love one another as I have loved you; Treat others the way you want them to treat you; Love God and love your neighbor as yourself; St. Francis tells us: "Make me an instrument of your peace;" Pope Francis told us just recently: "None of us should feel superior to anyone else."

Look around. We are different colors and races, ethnicities and religions. We are all different but we are all children of God. We are all sisters and brothers.

Remember Adam and Eve. When God confronted Adam about his sin, Adam said: "Eve made me do it." And Eve said: "The Devil made me do it." They both passed the buck. They accepted no accountability or responsibility. We often do the same--just talk or complain. We need to act. There are opportunities at home, at work, in our neighborhood, our city, our church, our nation.

Our country is suffering and divided. You and I need to work for greater civility; we need to work for compassion; we need to work for justice; we need to support adults and children seeking asylum from murder and violence and rape; we need to support families torn apart at our borders. What can we do? We can contact our representatives in Congress. We can vote. We can pray.

Recently, our daughter-in-law gave birth to our first grandchild - a girl. Can you imagine anyone trying to take her away from our son and his wife? They would give their lives to save her. And yet, these things are happening at our nation's borders.

In his gospel, Luke tells us "Jesus wept" over Jerusalem. Now Jesus weeps over our own nation.

Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan. Samaritans were despised by the Jews because they were not purely Jewish. And yet the Samaritan was the hero of the parable because he stopped and helped and loved his brother. And what did Jesus say to the lawyer and to us? He said: "Go and do likewise." Today and every day.