

Pastor Roy's sermon from Oct. 18, 2015 (Heritage Day Parish Svc)

What is our heritage? Inheritance from those who have gone before us. Possessions, habits, attitudes, and opinions handed down to us. The drive to work hard. The value of education—a lifetime of learning. Faith in goodness and mercy. Faith in Jesus and Love. Trust in neighbors working together for the common good. We and some of our ancestors received land because land was made available when we travelled across the ocean often to escape desperate circumstances. We have animals and plants that were bred and cultivated over thousands of years and handed to us. Our faith has been discussed and argued and contemplated over the years and handed to us. Creation has been studied and observed and parsed and the findings have been handed to us.

We have the heritage of many kinds of stories which help us understand our world. More personally we have the heritage of the memories of loved ones and friends. We have the heritage of prayer and trusting in profound love and the joy of life all around us. What will we do with all of these stories and gifts handed down to us? They paint for us a picture which must be interpreted and they call us to action which will determine the story we hand down to those who come after us.

In Today's gospel lesson, the disciples have forgotten their heritage. Jesus' disciples wish to be remembered because of some kind of greatness. They imagine this greatness coming from who they are or even, who they know. Sitting in a place of honor, surrounded by other great people and those who would serve their every need. Oh, it would be the life.

They weren't reading their Hebrew Bible. The greatest in the Scriptures were not the kings who had servants and all they desired. The greatest were those who suffered and took up the cause of the poor. In the words of Jesus, they were to be servants of all and to offer up their lives on behalf of many others.

As I think of heritage, this is our greatest call. To serve as we are able. I see you serving and caring for each other, for family, and neighbors. I see you looking out for those who need help. Our heritage is this, to look out for the least, to care, to live with compassion.

Another question we might consider in regard to our heritage is what heritage will we leave for our families and the faithful who come behind us. The heritage of good relationships and ministries? The heritage of serving compassionately, making a difference in our community and world. The heritage of taking our place among the saints with their strengths and weaknesses, sharing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen.