

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 26, 2018

On several Sundays of the year, there is a single common theme running thru all three of the readings. Today is an example. The theme of Joshua, of the letter to the Ephesians, and of St. John's Gospel is fidelity, faithfulness, keeping a promise one has made, a word one has given.

When we hear the word fidelity we are apt to think about the faithfulness of spouses to one another. But the concept of fidelity is much broader than that. Fidelity is present when I pay my bills, when I keep my promises. Your son shows fidelity when he takes out the garbage because he promised he would. Your daughter shows fidelity when she returns from a date on time because you asked her to. I am faithful when I keep an important promise like observing the terms of a will, or when I simply come on time for an appointment.

Fidelity and trust are companions. You always find them together. That is because fidelity creates trust in the people to whom I have been faithful.

Fidelity is the key to anyone's reputation. Label a man or woman untrustworthy, and they have lost the respect that is the basis of all human relations. We see either a claim for fidelity or a plea for trust in almost every area of our lives. Banks & other financial institutions often have the word "trust" in their corporate name. We set up trust funds to protect the rights of those unable to prosecute their own interests. The scout oath begins with a promise to be trustworthy. Every dollar bill has printed on it the words: "in god we trust." Without fidelity and trust, all commerce would come to a standstill.

Both love and fidelity are found in the person of Jesus. He gave his life for us. And he never broke a promise to his followers, even to his enemies. Because of his fidelity, his apostles trusted him completely. And when he promised such an unbelievable thing as his body to eat and his blood to drink, their only response could be: "lord, to whom shall we go; we love you and trust you, for you have the words of eternal life."

Fr. John Nolan