**Second Hand Preacher**

*Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time*

February 15, 2015

**1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1**

As a church, we want to be welcoming to all God’s people. If a person or, in the case of a child, his or her parents decide to follow the Lord with a Catholic faith, we want them to feel included. We offer them sacraments and they give to the church their whole selves. God wants to call them his own and wants them to use their gifts and talents to build up the Kingdom of God right here on earth. Strong parishes are those who can invite the faithful into full and active participation. This includes worship, outreach, formation and any other aspect of the community.

Things were similar in St. Paul’s time. He had a bit of a problem with his Christian Community in Corinth. There was a division between the Jewish converts to Christianity and those of Gentile origin. There were big differences in customs and laws that the two sides faced. The ones who had been Jewish had very strict dietary laws surrounding what they ate and how it was prepared. This was not the case for the Gentiles. Paul, who grew up Jewsh, believes that the Gentiles do not have to follow Jewish law in order to become Christian. Christians are not to be judged by what they ate, but they are all to be included.

Paul seeks the good of the whole rather than his own benefit. Living for Christ and Christ’s people is now Paul’s way of life. He wants to imitate Jesus in all that he does. Christ died for us all that we may possess eternal life. Paul would follow closely in the footsteps of Christ by becoming a martyr. We might not be called to actual physical martyrdom, but God may choose to help us die to self. Giving things up for the good of the whole is a way to earn the blessings of martyrdom. Giving of one’s self not expecting anything in return is a great way to die to our sometimes selfish desires. Paul challenges the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he is of Christ. Following the way of Jesus is a great way to imitate.