

**For the Right Reason**    Third Week of Easter    Monday, April 11, 2016    8:15 AM  
Acts 6:8-15;    **Jn 6:22-29**    St. Stanislaus, bishop, martyr    (If we really follow God for the right reason, we will attain eternal life, but we may lose our life here and now.)

**“Amen, amen, I say to, ‘You are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled.’”**

But I thought the loaves were the sign. Well, yes and no, we can see a sign but not perceive it as a sign. Seeing is not the same thing as perceiving. **Perceiving is seeing the connection.** And what Jesus is saying is you are looking for me for the wrong reason. This is a very tragic flaw in the life of people, doing a good thing but for a wrong reason. **In moral theology it is said that one can do the right thing for the wrong reason, and that is therefore an evil act. Doing the wrong thing for the right is also an evil act. For something to be praiseworthy it has to be the right thing for the right reason.**

In this case we are talking about following Jesus, which is obviously good; or you could even say more generally speaking this is about being religious, which of course should be good, but can be spoiled by false motivations. Here the motivation is getting something for yourself: eating the loaves, being filled. **There are a lot of people who follow religion or follow some form of faith because they see it as somehow benefiting them in the here and the now.** Now of course as James admits, there is great benefit in religion. There is great benefit, but the benefit is not necessarily in the here and now and is not measurable in terms of our increased standard of living.

Now there are many evangelists today who preach exactly that, sad to say, that God really wants us to be prosperous, which is true, but then they reach the false conclusion: therefore if you believe, you will be prosperous. That is not true because **God’s general will for human beings is that we all are healthy and prosperous, but that doesn’t mean the means to attain**

**that is faith.** Faith is for something more than merely prospering now. That's why Jesus says you should be seeking the food that leads to eternal life. That is a good intention; that is a right intention. That is **a correct reason for being religious or for following in a way of faith. It is seeking eternal life,** in other words, since only God is eternal, seeking communion with God. **But seeking communion with God may cost us.** That's what's wrong with the so-called prosperity gospel: there is no martyrdom in it.

Now today we celebrate the feast of St. Stanislaus who is a martyr, eleventh century. That is one of the costs of discipleship. **If we really follow God for the right reason, we will attain eternal life, but we may lose our life here and now.** And if we don't lose our lives, we may lose something else. We may lose our friends. We may lose our families. Maybe our children or our parents will walk away from us if we are faithful to God. The question is, what's more important? There is a sifting in life; **there is a testing in life.** That is never taken away. That is part of the reason why we have life on earth: for sifting, for testing **to see whether we really want what is really desirable, which is eternal life with God.** And the bread that affords us this is eternal life and even religion itself comes up with all kinds of substitutes. So the testing continues.

“So they said to him, **‘What can we do to accomplish the works of God?’**” Is this the right question? No, that's all about us. **This is stemming not from a desire to please God, but from a desire to be somebody,** to be important, to shine, even in the sight of God. So “Jesus answered and said to them, **‘This is the work’**”—this is the work that you are sent. This is the work I want you to do: believe. Did you ever think of believing as work? Actually it is. Real belief, really trusting in God is actually work. And it's the work God asks of everyone, not just some. **‘Believe in the one he sent.’**