

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2018

Leo Trese, author of *Seventeen Steps to Heaven*, writes *The director of a proposed supercolossal movie was engaged in the task of choosing an actress for the leading part in the picture. He sat at his desk with dozens of photographs spread out before him that had been supplied by various agents who were seeking the part for a client. Eventually the director put his finger on one photograph and said to his secretary, "There is exactly the one I want. Phone the woman and get her in here."* It is a big jump from Hollywood to Heaven, from a movie director to God. Yet we have here an example, however inadequate, for the reason of your existence. Back in the limitless reaches of eternity, God made his plans for the universe and did the casting for all the parts that must be filled, down to the end of time. In his divine mind, He looked over all the pictures of all the souls, limitless in number, whom He could create. When He came to the image of you, He stopped and said, "This is a person who moves me to love. This is a person I want with me for all eternity. This is the person, too, whom I need for a special part in my plan."

Human images are always inadequate in describing God and His actions, but this story is still fundamentally true. God made you. He chose you out of all the countless millions of other souls he could have created and **did not**. His thoughts of you moved God. Moved Him to love you, desire you. Loved you so much He did not want to be without you. And even though there are billions of others He loves equally and did create, for you there was a special part in His plan of creation. A role for you that, while many others could do it, none could do it quite as well as you. And so God chose you. This is your vocation in life both here and for eternity.

All this speaks to just how special you really are. You are called by God to fill a special part in this world and the next. You are not just one of a hundred billion souls created by God in an absent-minded moment of creativity. You are important to God and He has an intense, personal interest in you. He has poured out countless blessings on you. Our vocation imposes on us the obligation to justify God's love for us, his hopes for us. We meet that obligation when day by day we try to do his will to the best of our ability. In all our decisions and in all our choices we should ask ourselves "What does God want?" instead of "What do I want?" This doesn't mean our will and God's will are always going to be different. God loves us totally. Frequently, He will help us know his desires for us by the gifts and talents he has given to us. We come to know his will for us in part by his making it attractive to us; by letting us think that the course of action He wants is the one we have gladly chosen for ourselves. Yet conflicts will arise and when they do we must be willing to surrender our desires to God. This unswerving attachment to God's will is key. We rarely know what special job God has chosen for us...that job which no one else can do as well as we. It may be a particular person he will be able to reach only through us. It may be some chain of events only you can initiate or some evil only you can avert. In most cases we will not know until we are home in heaven what the particular task that only we could do was. So it is of great importance that we strive every day, in all things, no matter how large or small they may be to do God's will.

So how do we know God's will? That will be a topic for our next column. But for now remember this. God never gives up on you. He even died for us instead of replacing us when we failed to listen to Him, fail to follow Jesus. God is our loving Father who is constantly forgiving, constantly giving us another chance. He is the God of second chances.

- Father Tom