



One day the newly installed pastor walked around the streets of his new parish to acquaint himself with the people in the neighborhood. One of his first stops was at the local shoemaker's shop.

The pastor talked to the cobbler, using, at times, some lofty theological language. The cobbler replied with keen understanding and deep spiritual insight that left the pastor astonished. *"You shouldn't be cobbling shoes,"* started the pastor. *"A man with understanding and a clear manner of expressing those thoughts should not be doing such menial, secular work."*

The cobbler was quick to reply, *"Pastor, you better take that back now!"* *"Take what back?"* asked the pastor. *"Take back,"* responded the cobbler, *"that I'm just doing menial, secular work."*

Becoming annoyed, the cobbler continued, *"Do you see that pair of boots on the shelf? They belong to the son of the Widow Healy, whose husband died last year. She's supported by her only child, who manages to keep a roof over their heads by*

*working outdoors every day. I hear bad weather is in the forecast, and I felt the Lord saying to me, 'Will you cobble Widow Healy's boy some shoes so he won't catch a cold and come down with some sickness?' I replied, 'Certainly, Lord, I will.'"*

Looking at the pastor, the cobbler said, *"Pastor, now you preach sermons under God's direction, I trust. And I will cobble that boy's boots under God's direction. Then, one day, when the final rewards are given out, the Harvest Master will say to you and to me the same approving pronouncement - 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. (Mt 25:21)'"*

Faithfulness and doing everything for God will always make a difference as we live out the charism St. Guido Maria shared with us.

St. Paul, a faithful servant of the crucified and Risen Lord reminds and assures us that *"Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)*

The night of Easter our Lord reveals *"the beauty"* of God's Love, who, passing through the sacrifice of the cross and death, is transfigured in the Risen Jesus, ever living and ever present in and among those who put his Word into practice, ready to put on His apron... ready to love and serve others just as He did, not only on Holy Thursday.

Still experiencing the consequences of the pandemic, we need even more of that oil called 'patience, understanding, thinking of others, and compassion,' in our daily life and relationships.

In each present moment we are invited to remain faithful and to renew that "Yes," in community, we said a few or many years ago, to the One who called us to follow in his footsteps and to carry out his mission today, so to experience resurrection and new life and share hope with those who cross our paths.

***A Happy and grace-filled Holy Week and Easter to you all!***

**Fr. Mark Marangone, s.x.**



Saint Guido Maria Conforti