

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
August 29, 2021**

RIGHT FOCUS

In life it's easier to focus on the small things rather than on the big things. The big things are more of a challenge, more difficult.

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus criticized the Pharisees and the scribes for placing more focus on the little things than on the bigger, more important things. The Pharisees and scribes wanted to know why Jesus's followers were not observing the traditional purification rite associated with eating and other daily activities.

While not disparaging those external rituals, which were meant to remind people of God, Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that their focus and attention would be better placed on the bigger, more important things, namely the commandments of God. Far more important than deciding whether people were ritually clean and worthy to participate in prayer, the scribes and Pharisees were to be focused on what was in the human heart.

Saint James also stresses the importance of focusing on the bigger things. He writes that religion involves not only listening to the word of God and participating in prayer, it also involves works of charity, doing the bigger things.

Focusing on only the little things in religion, such as external rituals, is easy to do. It demands little, perhaps as little as one hour per week for Sunday Mass, and it allows us to go on living as we choose the rest of the week.

Focusing on the bigger things, focusing on the commandments of God and on the conversion of heart demanded of those who truly hear and embrace the teaching and example of Jesus, is far harder and more challenging.

Jesus came to focus our attention on the big things - the big things that lead to eternal life!

With affectionate prayers,

Father John Carlos