

Friday of the 32nd Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours
November 11, 2011 8:30am

Jesus in today's gospel advises us not to live on the surface of life.

He says: *"Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it."*

There was a famous Austrian psychiatrist named Victor Frankl.

Frankl, a psychiatrist and a Jew, says much the same thing as Jesus but in different words.

Frankl's thinking was certainly influenced by the time he spent in the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz.

Frankl's words, I think, help us to appreciate Jesus' words all the more.

He says this:

"I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. Being human always points, and is directed, to something or someone, other than oneself.

The more one forgets himself – by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love – the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.

In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.

In accepting this challenge to suffer bravely, life has a meaning up to the last moment, and it retains this meaning literally to the end."

We would say a bit differently.

We would say that being human and being like Christ always points us beyond self, to God and to others.

We would say that by giving ourselves to God and to others we come to the fullness of what God made us to be, the fullness of life.

We would say that it is God who ultimately empowers us to do this.

But with those Christian and Catholic understandings and nuances, Victor Frankl's words are very insightful.

He helps us to appreciate in a new and different way what Jesus says here:

"Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it."