

16th June 2020

Only?

**“Value yourselves, and men despise
You must be proud if you’ll be wise.”**

Mary, Lady Chudleigh, To the Ladies

My father was a bus-driver all his life, and a very good bus-driver he was too. He was proud of his work: proud of his popularity as a driver/courier on his summer tours to the Western Islands; proud that the kids on the School Run would confide their little secrets to him; proud that he could get his bus through winter storms; proud of his timekeeping; proud of his uniform. And I never *once* heard him say he was *only* a bus-driver.

He'd served in the RAF in North Africa during World War II, where he was a truck-driver with the Transport Division. He was never a pilot, and, indeed, never flew – apart from one occasion when he had to do a mandatory parachute-jump, which absolutely terrified him! But not once did I hear him say about his War service that he was *only* a truck-driver – and he had medals to prove that he'd served the same as everyone else.

How often the word “only” is used to describe people. *Only a housewife ...* drop the “only” and be thankful for good homemakers; *only a shop-assistant ...* implying someone who serves in a store has a menial job. Cut out the “only” and let's be proud of the service we all give.

During a TV report on the current pandemic, a BBC reporter was interviewing a domestic in a Covid Ward. As this man was mopping the corridor floor – and not stopping during the interview – he said, “I'm not a doctor or a nurse. They don't do what I do. I don't do what they do. But we all matter. We all have a part to play.” I shed tears when I heard that!

Praise God for people who are is proud of what they do. There was no “only a domestic” for this man, nor should there be. He's a *good* domestic! I'm glad he's reminded me of that. So, let's drop the “only” and be proud to be homemakers, shop-assistants, domestics and bus-drivers. Let's value *everyone* for what they do to benefit us all.

A prayer for today

*Living God, we are not “only” to you, because we are unique and valued in your Love.
Help us to value ourselves and one another by being the best that we can be. Amen.*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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