

Connect!

Uniting Word & World



Sunday, January 25, 2015

A Climb We Can't Make Alone

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/012515.cfm>

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20



It was one of the famous adventures in recent history: the breathtaking climb up the Dawn Wall of Yosemite's El Capitan.

Rock climbers Tommy Caldwell and Kevin Jorgeson spent six years planning the venture, which took them nineteen days to achieve what no one else had done—scrambling up the sheer three-thousand-foot granite monolith in a “free climb,” using ropes only to catch the occasional fall.

Talking about the climb after, [they spoke of the deeper meaning behind their achievement](#). The climbing duo told NBC News they hope their feat will inspire others, even those who don't care to scale mountains:

“I hope they take the time to find their own Dawn Wall, if you will, and use this project as an example of what you can achieve and what you can experience when you dream big and you seek help in a partner to complete something and not give up,” Jorgeson, 30,

said in a joint interview with Caldwell, his 36-year-old mentor.

“The climbers recalled many moments of elation, fear, frustration, and companionship as they made their way up the wall with just their feet and cracked, bloodied fingers to propel them. They slept in sleeping bags suspended from the face, and had a crew haul gear, including film equipment and electronics to post updates on social media. There were long periods of rest between pitches, leaving them time to enjoy the view and savor meals.”

One key to their success, they said, was their dependence upon each other:

“Caldwell, who’d grown up watching his father climb El Capitan and had completed dozens of varied ascents of the mountain, refused to consider finishing alone. He’d tried that himself years earlier and failed. ‘I don’t think I let myself go there,’ Caldwell said. ‘I really wanted to do it with Kevin. I know at one point he was looking pretty down and I just told him that, “I’m in this for the long haul with you.”’

“Jorgeson added: ‘I’ll forever be grateful for that support.’”

In this Sunday’s Gospel, we meet some other men beginning their own extraordinary adventure: the first disciples called by Jesus at the Sea of Galilee. Significantly, though, they do not embark on this particular adventure solo. Jesus, notably, calls them in pairs. The implicit message: the great adventure of Christianity is not lived out in isolation. Even in its very beginnings, you can see the seeds being planted of what will become a community—of saints and sinners gathered around the table of the Lord, and working in the vineyards and spreading the Gospel and reassuring one another, very simply: “I’m in this for the long haul with you.”

This Gospel passage is often used to inspire vocations—and it serves as a reminder, too, that vocations don’t flourish in vacuum. No matter what one’s calling, whether to religious life or marriage or the single life, it can only be lived out with the love and support of others.

Whatever mountains we climb, whatever impossible feats we attempt, we are not alone.

And our constant companion, of course, is Christ, who accompanies us up every wall, and whose extended hand makes it easier to reach the summit and arrive where God wants us to be.

Dcn. Greg Kandra

PRAYER

Lord, there are so many things in my life that I do not understand,
so many questions about the future that I need to ask.
What is Your plan for me?
What is the work You want me to do?
All I really know is that You love me.
Show me the road You want me to walk—
to fulfillment, to happiness, to holiness.
And if You are calling me to
priesthood or to the religious life, give me the strength to say “yes”
and the grace to begin even now
to prepare myself for the challenge
of a life spent in Your service and
in the care of Your people.
I ask You this in Jesus’ Name.
Amen.

—*Prayer to Discern a Vocation, Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington*

NOTICES

2015 CATHOLIC SOCIAL MINISTRY GATHERING

The annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is organized by the USCCB's Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development in collaboration with four other USCCB departments and sixteen national Catholic organizations. The 2015 Gathering will take place from Saturday, February 7 to Tuesday, February 10, 2015, in Washington DC to explore the theme of To Go Forth: Encountering Christ in the Heart of the World. To register, visit

<http://www.cvent.com/events/to-go-forth-encountering-christ-in-the-heart-of-the-world/event-summary-45867e9fce7444f9af42ed2b5d050392.aspx>.

SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa, which has no set national date, gives much needed aid to the Church in Africa while expressing the gratitude of the Church in the United States for the warm and generous assistance of the African priests and sisters in our parishes. The USCCB has resources available for this national collection on its website at

<http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/solidarity-fund-for-africa/collection/index.cfm>.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated in the United States from January 25–31. Many parish communities hold special events in honor of Catholic Schools. For more information and for resources and ideas, visit: <http://www.ncea.org/our-services/catholic-schools-week>.

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