



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

Connect!

Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, October 18, 2015

There Is No Need to Fear

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/100415.cfm>

Isaiah 53:10-11

Hebrews 4:14-16

Mark 10:35-45



It is quite amazing to consider the status that [Blessed Mother Teresa](#) gained in this world by living a life that certainly was not mainstream in any modern culture. While so many of us on this planet sought to advance ourselves and accumulate more and more wealth, she lived a life of poverty and of service to others. Yet, she was held in such high esteem by so many.

In North America, our modern history is filled with figures who have lived similar lives. [Dorothy Day](#) started the [Catholic Worker Movement](#) and lived with those who were poor and cast out of mainstream society. [Catherine Doherty](#) began the [Madonna House Apostolate](#) to serve the needs of the poor and to provide a community for lay people and religious to live a simpler way of life. While Saint John Paul II was pope he opened the cause for both of these women toward canonization. There are always examples of people like this around us and, for the most part, they are admired and held

up as examples of lives full of generosity and compassion. So why are so many people more like James and John in this Sunday's Gospel reading from Mark?

In the reading, the apostles are concerned about status and where they will end up when Jesus leaves. Jesus says to them, "Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all." He then explains to them that idea of status they have here on earth is not true status that has any merit in the kingdom of heaven. He lays out to them that he is to be their example, saying, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In the Gospel of Mark that we will hear *next* Sunday, Jesus meets a blind beggar on the side of the road. He encounters the man and heals his blindness, demonstrating to his disciples how

those who are the least are truly the ones with status in his reality. The Teresas, Dorothys, and Catherines of our age have heard and understood this message, choosing to follow Jesus by becoming the servant of all.

Some will say it is arrogance, selfishness, materialism, or pride that keeps most of us from hearing the words directed at James and John and following them. But I suspect it is not as simple as a case of good versus sin. For many people, the words of Jesus are beautiful and speak of a life of fulfillment, which is why we laud rather than ridicule those who follow them. What keeps more of us from following this path is an emotion as common as love itself: fear.

We are comfortable in our modern lives padded with technology, entertainment, personal goods, and wealth. We are, in essence, safe. It is unsettling to think of venturing outside our comfort zone. We are like children learning to swim. We are told the truth, that we will not drown, yet we do accept it as reality. Any thought of letting go of the wall or venturing into the deep end fills us with terror.

We can say that society does not see the way of life that modern saints live as desirable. Yet, few would seek to denigrate or disparage them. Instead, we may say, "It takes a special person to live that way," or, "Life has dealt us a different set of circumstances that prevent us from truly being the servant of all." If we had more money, more time, or more freedom we could be somewhat like these modern examples, or even like Jesus himself.

But the Gospels do not record Jesus checking out the bank accounts of those he called to be fishers of men. We do not read about an interview process where they are questioned about their amount of free time or other obligations that may have them tied up. And when Jesus sends them forth with the Great Commission to bring this good news to all the ends of the earth, the Gospels do not inform us of any vetting process the first disciples put into place to make sure those who decided to follow Jesus were good candidates.

The fact is that Jesus simply told the first apostles to drop their nets, leave their possessions behind, and follow him. The command then was to baptize all men and women into this way of life. What kind of servant of all would call others to this life without continuing to care for them? Do we not believe that God cares for us so much that if we just let go and follow him that we will receive all we need?

Someone held in high esteem once said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." He may have been speaking to a different set of circumstances, but the truth of that statement speaks to us here as well. There is no need to fear. Perhaps the call has been getting louder and louder for someone reading this to let go and let God. The rewards are greater than any sacrifice. And who knows? Maybe years from now some other writer will be writing a similar reflection about this very same reading and will speak of a similar but larger group of people being considered for sainthood: Teresa, Dorothy, Catherine, and...?

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

PRAYER

Eternal Word,
only begotten Son of God,
teach me true generosity.

Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
To give without counting the cost,
to fight heedless of wounds,
to labor without seeking rest,
to sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
save the knowledge that I have done your will.
Amen.

—Prayer for Generosity, St. Ignatius Loyola

NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE, October 22–25

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is hosting its annual conference in Chicago, IL from October 22–25 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. For more information on the conference and to register, visit <http://catholicstewardship.com/programs-a-events/annual-conference/2015-annual-conference-information>.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2015

Many dioceses will take up a collection to support the Society for the Propagation of the Faith the weekend of October 18, 2015. LPi customers will find resources to promote this collection on Art & Media Portal. You can also find the materials resources at: www.onefamilyinmission.org/society-propfaith/i-am-a-missionary.html.

RESPECT LIFE MONTH

October is Respect Life Month, and the first Sunday of October is Respect Life Sunday. The USCCB has several resources available to encourage special events and activities throughout October. View the materials at <http://usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/index.cfm>.

Visit the LPi website for information on services and publications to build a vibrant parish.
www.4LPi.com

Liturgical Publications Inc
2875 S. James Drive
New Berlin, WI 53151
(800) 950-9952 ext. 2469
Send email address changes to:
lpiconnections@4LPi.com

To opt out of receiving this midweek reflection as part of your *Connect!* subscription, contact: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

Copyright ©2015, Liturgical Publications Inc. All rights reserved.