



Bringing Home the Word

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
June 30, 2019

God's Kingdom Is Ahead

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Sometimes, someone's actions have hurt me so badly that I hardly knew how to react. At those times, I have dealt with sadness, anger, and the desire for revenge. It takes me a long time to let go of hurt. My mind goes on offense. I think about what I wanted to say. I want the person to acknowledge the hurt, apologize, admit I was right, and say she was wrong. There are times I feel I'm caught in a trap of my own making. I want to be free of the hurt, but I don't want to let it go until the other person totally satisfies my needs.

In the Gospel, the apostles wanted to call down fire on the Samaritan village that did not welcome Jesus. They wanted the people of the village to see how wrong they were and how right Jesus was. I imagine they talked about it until Jesus, tired of hearing their complaints, rebuked them.

Why did he do that? At least part of the answer comes in the passage that follows Jesus' rebuke. Would-be followers of Jesus want to attend to something in their past life before they join him. Jesus reminds them of the futility of that by using an example that is immediately apparent to farmers.

To plow a straight line, we have to look ahead and follow the one who leads us. If we turn our heads to look back, our line and our lives will go crooked. Clinging to past hurts makes it hard to look ahead. If we are to be disciples, we must learn to let go and forgive in the same way that we are forgiven. +

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Sunday Readings

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Please, let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and I will follow you."

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 9:51-62

Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

A Word from Pope Francis

Mercy is something which is difficult to understand: it doesn't eliminate sin.... Mercy is the manner in which God forgives.

—Morning meditation, April 7, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I spend too much of my life "looking in the rearview mirror"?
- If I am holding a grudge against someone, can I reach out to him or her today and make peace?

Christian Parenting in a Secular World

By Kathy Coffey

Just as we are made in God's image, so do our children model us. If they are to appreciate and then give even a glimmer of God's unconditional love, they must first experience it from their parents. This prompts the questions: What specifically do Christian parents hand on to their children?



Which of our qualities do we most want them to imitate?

The *General Directory for Catechesis* affirms the role of parents: "Parents are the primary educators in the faith (GDC 255). Parents nurture faith by showing their children the richness of lived faith. "In a certain sense, nothing replaces family catechesis, especially for its positive and receptive environment, for the example of adults, and for its first explicit experience and practice of the faith" (GDC 178).

A child who has been neglected or abused has difficulties trusting others. If Mom or Dad doesn't respond when an infant wails from hunger, that child gradually abandons hope that anyone will meet his or her need. If the cry is answered consistently, the parent lays the foundation for a life of faith, trust, freedom to express oneself, and the joy of being comforted.

A parent's tenderness when feeding a baby or playing with a child speaks

volumes about God's loving concern. Initially, humans can't understand abstractions. We learn from touch, voice, hugs, and gestures. This simple, unspoken language is irreplaceable for the message it delivers: You are valuable, cherished.

Parents who are nervous about conveying Catholic doctrine they

haven't studied since eighth grade can be reassured. A loving, personal relationship with God is best nourished at home. Adults asked about their first memory of faith often say the Christmas crèche or carols, Grandma working in her rose garden near the statue of St. Francis, family prayer before meals or at bedtime, Scripture stories, family traditions during Advent or Lent. Without that early foundation, later religious education has little basis on which to build.

The parish, school, and faith-formation program can excel at sharing the content of our faith. Trained homilists, catechists, and teachers may use the latest strategies and resources, but they admit their job becomes easier when it's reinforced in the home.

Parents may convey more by their attitudes than by words. They also know their child better than anyone else, so they're in a position to communicate clearly. Does a child see parents sacrificing their leisure time to read a

bedtime story and say evening prayers? Do they notice intentional efforts toward kindness and peacemaking in the home? If so, the message is obvious: My parents value me and our faith.

Most parents want their children to succeed academically, socially, or athletically. They invest time and money in education, parties, or sports. Equally important, but often neglected, is a child's inner life. At some time, the child will face disappointment: not making the team, failing a class, losing a friend, or experiencing a death. He or she will then need to tap nourishing resources.

Again, parents can be models: when they face loss, they turn to Jesus, who was certainly not an academic, athletic, or social success. He died an outlaw, a criminal crucified by religious and state authorities. While that's hardly a parent's dream for a child, Jesus gave us another definition for success. From his tragic tomb emerged everlasting life. He taught us to value our union with God more than anything the world can offer. +

PRAYER

Lord, your cross and resurrection set us free. Please liberate me from the prison of selfishness. Empower me to lovingly serve my brothers and sisters.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage, Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 1–6

Monday, Weekday:
Gn 18:16–33 / Mt 8:18–22

Tuesday, Weekday:
Gn 19:15–29 / Mt 8:23–27

Wednesday, St. Thomas:
Eph 2:19–22 / Jn 20:24–29

Thursday, Weekday:
Gn 22:1b–19 / Mt 9:1–8

Friday, Weekday:
Gn 23:1–4, 19; 24:1–8, 62–67 / Mt 9:9–13

Saturday, Weekday:
Gn 27:1–5, 15–29 / Mt 9:14–17