



Bringing Home the Word

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
October 27, 2019

Fighting to be Right

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Why are we so often and easily convinced that our own positions and opinions are right? When faced with conflict and opposition, we can be tempted to shout down or coerce the people on the other side. In politics and religion, heated and controversial debates lead some to accuse others of being unpatriotic, uncaring, ignorant, and even un-Christian. Regardless of our behavior, being convinced that we are 100 percent correct comes at a price. Rory Vaden, an author, speaker, and self-discipline strategist, writes: "If I already 'know' what's true, I don't need to

entertain the idea of another perspective. ...Many of us hold on to beliefs, even about our own lives, that aren't accurate. ...Yes, we want to be proven 'right,' even if what we're right about keeps us from growth and change."

When we eliminate dialogue, we alienate ourselves. We never discover what other people know, additional (or better) solutions, and the full truth. The Pharisee in today's parable believes that talking with the tax collector would be beneath him, even meaningless: The tax collector is a sinner, while he is a righteous man whose works prove his worth. In his self-absorbed superiority he cannot see his lack of compassion or find humility before God. He forgets the many declarations in Scripture that God hears the cries of the poor, weak, and oppressed. This week, let us listen to these least ones and become one with them. +

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Sunday Readings

Sirach 35:12–14, 16–18

[The Lord] shows no partiality to the weak but hears the grievance of the oppressed.

2 Timothy 4:6–8, 16–18

The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.

Luke 18:9–14

[Jesus said,] "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

A Word from Pope Francis

Sadly, we are witnessing a presentation of religion and religious values in a fundamentalist way, which is used to justify the spread of hatred, discrimination, and violence. The justification of such crimes on the basis of religious ideas is unacceptable, for "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

—Joint declaration with the pope of the
Armenian Apostolic Church,
June 26, 2016



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- In disagreements with others, do I feel the need to win or be "right"?
- When dealing with others do I try to put myself "in the other person's shoes"?

Exercise, Sports, and Spirituality

By B. G. Kelley

“Why’d you do that?” I asked my wife. In a five-mile race, she’d slowed in the last mile, allowing a friend to beat her. “It meant more to her to get there first,” she said.

Wholesome spirituality must include the body to help us move toward a holistic union with God. Physical play—running, biking, swimming, or dancing—is tied to the human spirit.

If we put physical play and exercise in a spiritual dimension, it will help us accept absolute concepts—winning and losing, discipline, hard work—and understand life better. It will reveal character and grace; enlist intelligence and challenge; and teach respect for limits and laws.

Play nourishes the soul, making time wonderfully irrelevant, allowing us to escape from temporal struggles—bills, workplace stress, environmental desecration, and crime.

Play allows us to escape into our souls, reflect, and awaken innocence that often gets lost in adulthood. It keeps our lives from becoming merely about pleasure, power, and wealth.

Embracing the Journey

One autumn day long ago, I looked for my name on the locker room door at my high school. It wasn’t there. I’d failed to



make the basketball team.

Fr. Walter Conway noticed my dejected look when I shuffled into Latin class. “What’s wrong, son?” he asked. “I got cut from the basketball team,” I replied. He pulled me aside. “Son, you’re going to have to accept suffering and challenge as part of the search for fulfillment,”

he said. “Accept the suffering, then accept the challenge, and pray that God will show you the way to do something that will earn you a spot on the team next year.” Those words stuck in my psyche like a first kiss sticks to your lips.

I made a decision: I would fuse the physical and spiritual. I prayed while running four miles a day. By the following fall, when basketball tryouts came around, I’d be both physically and spiritually fit. I worked on my ball-handling and shooting, too.

I ran in Fairmount Park, a piece of paradise in Philadelphia. The autumn leaves along the Schuylkill River had turned to carrot orange, saffron gold, and scarlet red. The sun shimmered on the water. The air was crisp as celery. God provided this refuge for me. I even ran in the winter when it was so cold that icicles formed on my eyebrows. (I guess that was part of the suffering!)

When spring arrived, so did blossoming cherry trees, gentle breezes

off the water, and the rhythmic slicing of scullers’ oars, keeping time with my rhythms of prayer.

Summer came with its intense heat. (Again, the suffering!) But I kept reflecting on my Latin teacher’s words: “Accept suffering and challenge as part of the search for fulfillment.”

In autumn, I once again stood before the locker room door, reading the names of those who’d made the basketball team. My name was there! I’d arrived at my physical and spiritual destination, but the journey was as important as the arrival.

My physical-spiritual journey continued: I became a starter and exceeded my dreams by earning All-League honors and leading our division in scoring. More importantly—at least to my pop—basketball led to a college scholarship.

Know this: Exercise isn’t simply an investment in one’s health. Sure, it enriches muscle strength, bone density, and brain function—those factors that steadily decline with age. But sports and exercise can help us stay connected to God and the world. This can lead to a physical and spiritual ripening rather than a rotting, making us complete human beings. +



Lord, I am grateful you are close to the brokenhearted. In my brokenness I call on you. Have mercy on me, a sinner, small and precious in your eyes.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 28—
November 2

Monday, Sts. Simon and Jude:
Eph 2:19–22 / Lk 6:12–16

Tuesday, Weekday:
Rom 8:18–25 / Lk 13:18–21

Wednesday, Weekday:
Rom 8:26–30 / Lk 13:22–30

Thursday, Weekday:
Rom 8:31b–39 / Lk 13:31–35

Friday, All Saints:
Rv 7:2–4, 9–14 / 1 Jn 3:1–3 / Mt 5:1–12a

Saturday, All the Faithful Departed (All Souls):
Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 5:5–11 / Jn 6:37–40