

Encouragement Encouragement

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On Being Daring...

Having been considered, as a child to be a bit of a ‘dare-devil’, willing to take chances on climbing trees, jumping off moving objects etc., and probably giving my mother all sorts of frights for my safety, I have followed through with this theme as if ever there was a time for a daring response to living as a Christian, it is now. Sometimes daring is linked with being a risk taker and being courageous and brave.

We can all instance famous people, or not so famous, that have done brave things and have been rewarded with medals and accolades. While at Minsteracres (Passionist Community, North of England) for a few days of rest, reflection and prayer and pondering this issue of daring, I noticed the title of a retreat... ‘Daring Disciples’. This led me to think even more deeply about when, and if, we are called to be daring disciples.

We live at a time when in some places of persecution and violence it does require immense courage to be a Christian. We heard lately of many attacks on Christian groups all over the world, often merely labelled as ‘men, women, children’ when clearly these were targeted attacks. It almost feels like being daring for expressing this view too... Likewise voicing counter-cultural opinions requires much honesty, integrity and courage when faced with negative labels, being ignored, marginalised and dismissed, or mocked. There is now a feeling that conformity is allied to truth – and that the only true compassion requires acceptance of all norms whether they are just or not, Christian or not, or only expressing a personal view – and therefore to be rejected or ignored.

So the question remains: do we need to be ‘daring’ in the expression of our Faith and beliefs? We do not have to look far to read about the daring of the Disciples of Jesus’ time. Once they understood the ‘call to evangelise’ they became very open about what they believed and thought, to the point of being

“Obedience is a need of the soul; that without proper scope and corrected shape and admonitory word we languish and inflate and grow foolish, even to ourselves”

Simone Weil

willing to die for that faith in Jesus. Faith is often thought of as something ‘abstract’ but in reality it is a belief in something, but more importantly, *someone*. The Apostles and Disciples believed in Jesus, loved Him and were prepared to voice this belief because following Him was the key to their lives as Disciples. We all know the price that they and thousands of disciples, followers, paid throughout the centuries.

St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews –

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Hebrews 13: 7-8

And so today...what sort of daring is required of us? In a rationalistic, atheistic world where consensus seems to be the order of the day it is very important to respond and question how far we are prepared to compromise and to ask the questions of old, regarding the State versus individual conscience (and of course Christian ethics and teaching). It is commonplace today to assume that our desires have not only to be satisfied but have the statement attached to them as being ‘justified’ in all circumstances. To reject these desires is considered not to be ‘fair’ or to be lacking in compassion. This leads to a generality of all actions as being considered acceptable, regardless of a moral stance which would question them. Thus subjectivity gains ground, objectivity is diminished. Today a moral teaching is thereby dismissed as maybe a ‘nice idea’ at best, but not applicable, at worst.

It requires moral courage and daring discipleship today to voice the reservations surrounding many of the issues of contemporary life regarding marriage, family life, generosity to refugees and marginalised people, poverty, climate change, sexual identity and the safeguarding of children, not just in terms of

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abuse but their innocence and childhood. It is not wrong to defend the rights of the most vulnerable (adults and children alike) and to voice major ethical concerns about the consequences of actions taken, seemingly, for common good, but in reality most often a vociferous minority. It is not wrong to declare our belief in Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Saviour, indeed it is incumbent on us to do so.

Is this daring....?

If it is daring then we surely follow Jesus to the Cross. But we must not forget that we have been Baptised into Jesus and we have been given the Gifts to go with our call.

We have in June the Feast of Pentecost. The Gifts are given freely and for a reason: so that we can be daring in the strength of the Spirit. The often thought of as 'lofty gifts' are the very instruments for giving us the means and determination to be bold. Therefore gifts such as **Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude** (often known as Courage or Endurance), **Knowledge, Piety (Awe), Fear/Reverence of the Lord**, are gifts we require but they are all given. If we but use them they give us the spiritual equipment to make sensible and sensitive judgements, full of true compassion. As the 'Special Pastor' says:

"We pray that the Holy Spirit, who is the 'Rising Sap' may bring forth fruits of goodness and love in our daily lives. Because only then will people know that we are His Disciples."

Maybe we could consider why these Gifts were given and how to be effective and daring disciples by using them...

Halina Holman

Hosting - Poem for Corpus Christi
You are My Host too little to see
Hidden Divinity, Perfect Humanity
You are my Saviour this I believe
You are my food,
bread for the hungry,
and wine for the thirsty
always present, never forsaking
never forgetting
never unloving, never regretting
that you came for me
to save my lostness and my frailty.
One crumb would suffice for eternity
But you come in entirety
Oh Daily Bread, love of all humanity
Help me believe and serve unreservedly.

H.H. June 2015

Pope Francis

True freedom is found in letting go of the superficial things we cling to for security, embracing instead a discipleship that has the courage to follow Jesus in living in the fullness of the law. There are three attitudes that must form our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The first is going to what is essential. This does not mean 'breaking with everything' that does not suit us, because Jesus did not come 'to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. It means to go deep, to what matters and has value for life. Discipleship must begin with a living experience of God and his love. The second attitude disciples are called to adopt is renewal, which the Church is always in need of — And this requires sacrifice and courage, The Church must be 'shaken' by the Holy Spirit in order to let go of comforts and attachments, but we shouldn't be afraid of renewal, The third attitude of a disciple is the willingness to get our hands dirty and get involved in helping our brothers and sisters, .We are called to be brave, to have "that evangelical courage which springs from knowing that there are many who are hungry, who hunger for God, who hunger for dignity, because they have been deprived."

Columbia 2017



Feasts in June

- 1st St Justin
- 2nd **Seventh Sunday of Easter**
- 3rd St. Charles Lwanga and companions
- 5th St Boniface
- 9th **Pentecost Sunday**
- 11th St Barnabas, Apostle
- 13th St Anthony of Padua
- 16th **Holy Trinity (Sunday)**
- 20th St Alban
- 21st St Aloysius Gonzaga
- 22nd Ss John Fisher & Thomas More
- 23rd **Corpus Christi (Sunday)**
Body and Blood of Christ
- 24th Birth of St John the Baptist
- 28th Sacred Heart of Jesus
- 30th 13th **Sunday in Ordinary time**
Saints Peter & Paul (Holy Day)

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