

Scripture Reflection

27 September 2009

Here are a few thoughts on this Sunday's Gospel. Please remember that with this new format, should you wish, you can leave comments or begin a discussion using the web page.

Keep an eye out for Theology on Tap beginning October 6.

~Jen Delvaux

Director of High School and Young Adult Ministry

Gospel

[Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48](#)

At that time, John said to Jesus,
"Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name,
and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us."
Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him.
There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name
who can at the same time speak ill of me.
For whoever is not against us is for us.
Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink
because you belong to Christ,
amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.
"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,
it would be better for him if a great millstone
were put around his neck
and he were thrown into the sea.
If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.
It is better for you to enter into life maimed
than with two hands to go into Gehenna,
into the unquenchable fire.
And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.
It is better for you to enter into life crippled
than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna.
And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.
Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye
than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna,
where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

Reflection

As some of you might know, this summer a group of youth & young adults traveled to Guatemala to work with the people living in the garbage dump community. There,

amidst the poverty, filth, and desolation, we truly say that we saw the least of God's little ones.

It was tempting to congratulate ourselves on our magnanimous efforts to spend our time with those children. After all, we did not have to give up our time and money to fly down, seemingly to another world, and spend our summer vacation immersed in the stench of the Guatemala City Dump. But within just a few minutes of meeting the children, the teachers, the people in the impoverished community, we saw that we were going to truly encounter Christ.

We are taught, and rightly so, to be Christ for those around us. It becomes challenging when we realize that we in turn, need to allow others to be Christ to us. Particularly when it goes against everything we want to hold dear and believe. After the first week of the beautiful joy and heartwrenching struggle of working with the children, I fell very ill. First with the illness that the little microbes in the water there carry with them.

Then with the worst headcold I have had in years. Suddenly, I no longer was able to do what I thought I was supposed to do. Instead of trying to serve others, I had to allow myself to be served. Whether it was the small nursery children who just figured out I was not as playful as before or the school principal mothering me, I had to let go of all my preconceptions of what to expect. I had to see that God had a plan and it was infinitely more good and beautiful than what I had thought up in my planning.

It is easy to say, "This is the way it should be. This is the right way. This is." When we do so, we remove the space for God to work in our lives and our world. When we allow ourselves to see that God will work in the most unexpected ways and in the most unexpected people. From the comfort of a little boy in shabby, donated clothes to a Sister aptly named Esperanza who bring tissues, water, and compassion. Now I know I need to look not for what I expect, but for the goodness and beauty that God has planned. Even if it is covered with dirt and rags. Especially then.