



Daily Reflections

July 16, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 10: 34- 11:1

Jesus said to his Apostles:

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth.

I have come to bring not peace but the sword.

For I have come to set

a man against his father,

a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

and one’s enemies will be those of his household.

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,

and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

and whoever does not take up his cross

and follow after me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it,

and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“Whoever receives you receives me,

and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet

will receive a prophet’s reward,

and whoever receives a righteous man

because he is righteous

will receive a righteous man’s reward.

And whoever gives only a cup of cold water

to one of these little ones to drink
because he is a disciple—
amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”
When Jesus finished giving these commands to his Twelve disciples,
he went away from that place to teach and to preach in their towns.

Our Scripture Reflection

“Whoever receives you receives Me”: Are you aware of the awesomeness of that statement of Jesus? He loves us and trusts us enough to be His witnesses, so much so that whomever sees and hears us, sees and hears Jesus! Do you take that commission seriously? Are you aware of the huge amount of trust that He places in you? My first response is to beat my chest and say, “Lord, I am not worthy!” I do not think, however, that He will put up with that excuse for too long. Jesus means what He says. He never minced His words and took to tasks the religious leaders who did. No, my friends, we had better shape up and prepare to ship out....we have His good work to do.

Food for your Journey

Speaking of distinguishing between being afraid and being fearful, consider the manner in which Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest, met his death at the Nazi death camp, Auschwitz. Known as the "Saint of Auschwitz," Kolbe routinely gave up his meager food ration to those around him, conducted Mass however he could, and he regularly prayed for those in charge of the concentration camp despite their cruelty. The reward for such benevolent behavior turned out to be death by lethal injection.

Kolbe is most remembered for how he died. One night there was an escape from Auschwitz. The response of the prison officials was that 10 prisoners should die for every escapee. Roll call was ordered and, from the columns of people, 10 were selected to die. One selected man gasped, "I will never be able to see my wife and children again." Just then there was a stir in the line as Father Kolbe made his way forward. He said, "I want to die in place of this prisoner. I am old and of little use. He is in better condition." His request was granted, and he and nine other men were marched off to a bunker where they were left to starve. Kolbe survived for two weeks without food or water, consoling his fellow victims with his prayers. Finally, on August 14, 1941, when Kolbe had not yet died, he was given a lethal injection.

No doubt Kolbe experienced fear when he considered the prospect of his torturous death. Yet he must have had something of the divine perspective that Jesus spoke of. The Nazis could do their worst, but, in the end, all they could kill was Father Kolbe's body. With that assurance, he was able to confront that fear and offer himself in the place of the other man. Pope John Paul II declared Kolbe "The Patron Saint of Our Difficult [20th] Century."

A Prayer from the Heart

Lord Jesus, Cleanse me of all my sins and fill my heart with your Grace so that I can be a vibrant sign of Your Presence in this world. Keep me faithful to You at all times, Lord. Amen