



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time | October 14, 2018

Jesus Expects More Than the Minimum

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Commonly in recent years, large corporations whose business practices are questioned have replied, “Everything we have done is legal.” I have always been uncomfortable with that because it implies that those in charge will not do anything more than they have to in order to stay within the law. The minimum standard becomes the maximum standard. In our hearts and minds, though, we know that the common good is best served

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 7:7–11

I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.

Hebrews 4:12–13

Everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

Mark 10:17–30 or Mark 10:17–27

[Jesus said,] “Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

when people do more than they must. While doing the minimum required is everyone’s job, we expect more of those who are in positions of leadership. We expect more of our best and brightest. And Jesus expects more of those who follow him.

The young man who comes to Jesus is both secure and comfortable in doing what is required. Jesus agrees that he has done the minimum. But the young man himself knew there was more he could do. His intelligence, curiosity, and deep reflection told him that obeying the law was not enough. When he persisted in his question, Jesus called him to more. In the same breath, Jesus challenges all of us to find what more we can do. We might obey the Ten Commandments, attend Mass every Sunday, and not offend anyone. But do we: care for those who have less, support the Church, and follow Jesus even when it’s difficult? Are we willing to sacrifice our possessions and our lives, if necessary, for his sake? Is there more you can do today to reflect Christ to the world? +

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who are in positions
of leadership.*

A Word from Pope Francis

A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: “Tell me: When God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?” We must always consider the person.

—Interview with *America* magazine,
September 30, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Jesus calls us to do more. Will we answer his call?
- God sees all that we do. Are we comfortable owning up to our actions?



Is There a Place for Change in the Church?

By Michael D. Guinan, OFM

As a young priest, right after the Second Vatican Council, I remember a man approaching me after Mass, shaking with anger. “There are too many changes!” he said. “They’ve taken the ‘Amen’ away from the Our Father! Now they’ve gone too far!”

His reaction was a little extreme, but it points to a problem. Over the last fifty years or so, the question of change in the Church has been one of the most divisive of issues. For some “conservative” Catholics, there has been too much change; for some “progressives,” not nearly enough. So is there a place for change in the Church?

First, some facts: Even a quick survey of Catholic Church history shows that whether we’re speaking of organization, liturgy, or doctrine—the Church has indeed changed. Yet our core faith remains constant. The Creed we recite at Mass goes back to the early Christian centuries and is firmly rooted in the New Testament. Our understanding of it, however, has grown and developed through different times, cultures, and questions.

Instead of asking, “Should the Church change?” perhaps we should ask, “Where did we ever get the idea that it doesn’t or shouldn’t?”

A Healthy Body

An analogy may help. In the New

Testament, faced with the divisive issues of the Church in Corinth, Paul compared the Church to a body with different parts. Today, in light of our divisive issues, we might extend his comparison. A human body must constantly take in new things: air, food, and water. This is essential for health and growth. However, not everything we take in is healthy; at times we pick up germs and viruses. The body has an immune system to warn us when things are going wrong and to help sort out what’s harmful.

We can apply this idea to the progressive and conservative functions within the Church. To be healthy, the Church takes in new ideas, challenges, and experiences: It must be “progressive.” However, not all that comes in is good, so it also has a “conservative” dimension to help sort out the unhealthy elements.

The immune system, however, can have problems. On the one hand, it can be weak (after cancer) or nonexistent (as with AIDS). In this case, anything that comes along can become a major problem and may be fatal. Conversely, the immune system itself may malfunction (the so-called autoimmune diseases such as arthritis or lupus). In such cases, the immune system believes the body is sick and begins to devour the body itself. This, too, can be painful and potentially fatal.

Radical Christianity on the far left would represent the broken-down immune system; it’s not balanced by healthy conservatism. Fundamental Christianity on the far right would represent a diseased immune system; it’s not balanced by healthy progressivism. Both extremes can be very destructive.

Looking for Balance

A balance of progressive and conservative dimensions is basic and fundamental to the life of the body of Christ, the Church. But radical Christianity is not healthy progressivism, nor is fundamentalist Christianity healthy conservatism.

We all have a basic identity that lasts throughout our lives. Each of us also constantly changes. The same is true of the Church. It has its underlying, constant identity, but it also undergoes change.

We have an English word for living entities that don’t change—*dead*. As the saying goes, to live is to change. We believe the Church is the living body of Christ in the world. +

PRAYER

Lord, I’m grateful for your gentle reminders of what’s important in life. Help me let go of anything that blocks the flow of love from my heart to the hearts of my sisters and brothers.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 15-20

Monday, St. Teresa of Jesus:
Gal 4:22–24, 26–27, 31—5:1 / Lk 11:29–32

Tuesday, Weekday:
Gal 5:1–6 / Lk 11:37–41

Wednesday, St. Ignatius of Antioch:
Gal 5:18–25 / Lk 11:42–46

Thursday, St. Luke, Evangelist:
2 Tm 4:10–17b / Lk 10:1–9

Friday, Sts. John de Brébeuf,
Isaac Jogues, and Companions:
Eph 1:11–14 / Lk 12:1–7

Saturday, Weekday:
Eph 1:15–23 / Lk 12:8–12

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