

2009 Fall Combined Collection
HOMILY REFLECTION
by Fr. Reno Aiardi

“In God we trust: all others must pay cash!”

This is the sign that hangs over the checkout counter in one of our local stores, and brings smiles to the lips of many customers as they dig into their pockets for their wallets.

1.

The great theologian Karl Barth once wrote: “In God alone is there faithfulness; therefore, in faith we may trust Him, hold to Him, to His promise, and to His guidance. To hold to God is to rely on the fact that God is there for me, and to live in this certainty.” Another theologian graphically described trust in God in this way: “When a train goes through a tunnel and gets dark, you don’t throw away your ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.”

The Gospel tells us that the basic principles of our faith are universal. The sacredness of each individual does not cease on payday. Fair play is required in all places, and justice is essential everywhere. Even more than justice, we need mercy and compassion. These are the prerequisites to become a true disciple of Christ. Our great Christian heroes, known and unknown believe and continue to believe that the Gospel principles are meant for everyone.

2.

In a recent article in the Context magazine, Michael R. Weed bemoans the absence of heroes today; however, he ends the article having discovered some heroes. They are nameless, but their thoughts can stimulate our thinking and actions:

- The person who, though in pain, continues to look to the needs of others.
- The person who, facing a difficult decision refuses to decide merely on the basis of prudence or to rationalize their qualms.
- The person who, in spite of bitter disappointments, still praises God as the giver of all good gifts.
- All those who stand by promises and commitments made in good faith, remain loyal to friends, are alert to opportunity for helping others, especially the poor, the weak and the helpless.

Yes, many heroes do exist and are among us in this congregation. Are you one of them?

The following story is very relevant to these thoughts.

A visitor to Anton Lang’s pottery factory in Oberammergau, Germany, expressed regret that he had retired from playing Christ in the Passion play that is performed there every ten-years. The old potter said, “I still feel that I’m playing God if I shape things well.”

Actors or not, we may express our discipleship by shaping things well by following the plan of the Master in molding our work, our character, our minds, our homes and our personalities according to the pattern of God for human life.

Jesus Christ offers each of us a way that has never been equaled or approached. Many of our

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most renown Saints: St. Augustine, St. Francis Cabrini, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ann Seton, St. Frances Xavier and Mother Teresa, all tested and followed God's way. Moralists and philosophers, such as Aristotle, Kent, Schopenhauer, John Dewey, Sartre and Marx, offered profound substitutes to no avail. Our greatest glory and fulfillment comes when we do what we can and utilize our talents and resources available to help mold our relationships and our world to resemble those of the Master as much as possible.

3.

To conclude these reflections, I would like to relate the following true story:

On January 11, 1982, a tragic airplane crash occurred in Washington, D.C. There were 79 passengers on Air Florida, Flight 90, bound for Tampa, Florida. The plane never made it into the air. It plunged into the Potomac River, killing 74 passengers. A stewardess would have been victim number 75 had it not been for a young, 28-year old man named Lenny Shutnik, who dove into the frigid waters to rescue her. A week after the crash, a newspaper columnist, Mary McGory, did a story on Lenny Shutnik. One great line in the article summed up the meaning of being a hero. She wrote: "On a killer day in brutal winter, He threw us all a life-line to remind us that decency is not dead..."

Today all of us are invited to throw a lifeline to the many needy people we can help through the Fall Combined Collection, either in Africa, Latin America or the United States.

Please complete the Fall Combined Collection envelope with your preferences, and place it in the Special Collection. Every Missionary and the people they serve will appreciate your bountiful generosity.

Thank you for caring and sharing. May God bless you always for listening and answering the cry of the poor.