

The other day I briefly watched a video. It was about a monk in the Sinai Desert with the Coptic Christians, but originally he is of Australia. He was talking about how he came into the desert to do God's will. I'm like, okay..... Interesting to a point, but....

About 15 years ago or so a vocation's video was released. It was made in the East Coast, so it had that vibe. (Interestingly, I think it was Fr. Mike Schmitz' introduction to a wider audience.) Anyway, it had many talking heads speaking of vocations, but through it there was this theme, or this story, and it culminated at the end. This priest comes upon an accident and he rushes to this young dying man and hears his confession, after which the man dies. Maybe I am too jaded, but really???? The whole goal of sharing the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ comes down to this act? Clearly the video was trying to paint a "hero" version of the priest doing God's will.

On a Catholic webpage that I peruse lightly, questions always come up about what can be done and not done as Catholics. And it generally comes across like this: "Can I wear this cross, even though it has an extra bar? Will God get angry at me because with a 104 temperature I could not go to mass? I greeted a Protestant today, is that allowed?"

Summing up two decades of ministry: "Father, my faith life feels dead. How do I know I am doing God's will?" Well, what is going on? What are you doing? "I pray a lot." How do you pray? I pray for my husband/wife/ kids and grandkids and others. How? "I pray that they change and see the way and come back to church to do this and that. I pray that the president/governor/pope/pastor be better leaders." But what do you do?

St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, knew she wanted to be a Nun. She wanted to enter into the convent earlier than allowed, so she sought and got papal approval. Her goal was to become a great missionary and go into the world and make converts of people. That was all taken away from her, and she was not happy about it. She remained in her Convent. She was given the wisdom by God to see that her little ways were best. She accomplished God's will in these small ways.

One of the best aspects of our Catholic Faith and how we live it out, how we participate with Jesus to build the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth, is the understated reality that we don't have to do or accomplish huge things. We do not need to be heroes.

99.99% of us do not need to go to a desert and live a hermit's life. 99.99% do not need to go to foreign lands and convert the pagans.

100% of us will simply be called to do good for others.

100% of us will simply be called to be patient with others and listen.

100% of us will need to forgive others, and ask for forgiveness.

We will all be called to share with others; to smile for others; see beyond ourselves and our needs.

100% of us will be called to give of ourselves in some form.

It is the little ways of everyday life in which God's will is lived out. And it can be surprising these acts of kindness bear such great fruit.

If we think we have to do great and stupendous acts...that is probably not God but our own egos. I think we have to be very careful in seeking out heroic acts of ministry; so that it is not about drawing attention to ourselves.

Jesus points out to his disciples. They know he is the Christ, the anointed one. He has told them he will endure trial, suffering and he will die. And somehow he will be raised up. His disciples have watched him feed people, heal people, forgive people, welcome people. His whole ministry with them has been about giving.

And their concern is leadership; title, prestige. Which of them is the best. It is a condition we have to this day; these wonderful egos; these ideas of greatness.

St. Therese died at the age of 24. She was not well known beyond the walls of her convent during her lifetime. Once she went through her Dark Night, in which we had to trust in God, and lived her little way, life changed. Her "Fame" only came after her death when her sisters, literally, published and promoted her. And of course there are many stories of her sending roses to people in answer to prayer to this day.

Jesus reveals to us God is in the quiet acts of kindness, goodness, mercy; acts of love in which we give of ourselves for the good of others.

Jesus reminds us that God is present in those acts; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand would be his proclamation.

Eucharist itself is a quiet act of goodness, of giving. That simple bread and wine become something more; without flashes of light, or peals of thunder. The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, and we trust our hearts and minds that it is so.

Given to us, to Go and do God's will in the same manner.

It will be needed in the parking lot as we try to get out.

It will be needed in the stores as we wait in line.

In our homes with our family.

Let God's will be done, in the simple ways, and in all ways.