

5/1/21

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

This past week I overheard myself having a conversation with someone. Well, if I am honest here, I was not really having a conversation, I was really complaining. I was complaining about being put in a position where, no matter what I do or how hard I try, I am going to fall short of expectations. You see, I had gotten my feelings hurt by someone's obvious frustration and dissatisfaction in my efforts as Pastoral Coordinator and I was complaining. I was complaining about not wanting this position, feeling overburdened, knowing what I am supposed to be doing, but feeling like I am hitting every roadblock along the way. I was really whining. It was not my most shining moment.

As I listened to myself, I was ashamed. Here I was complaining about the privilege I have been given to serve my church and my Lord (to the best of my ability), when my burden is so very small. As I walked away from the conversation (a.k.a. whining session), I was struck by how Jesus must have felt. He did not ask to be our Savior. He was subjected to ridicule and criticism in his efforts to live out his calling. He hit every roadblock along the way. People doubted him and his motives. He did not want to die on the cross (Luke 22:42 "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done"), and yet Jesus did what was asked of him.

How often in our daily lives do we focus on the things we want or do not want and forget that our divine Lord is the one at the wheel. When things are not going the way, we want them to go, it is easy for us to complain and feel frustrated. It is even easier for us to be hurt and angry at those that ridicule our efforts, but that is not what our Jesus did and we should be trying to be Christlike in our daily lives.

"Offer it up"! That is what my good priest friend counsels every time I share a struggle with him. He is kind and listens and is always supportive, but he also reminds me how life on earth is not the end, and our Lord sees our heart even when others cannot. He is so right. We live each day as an opportunity to grow closer to God and strengthen our relationship with our Lord. What we do and what we say, how we act and how we respond, how we treat others and how we feel compassion for others all help us to choose between growing closer to God or falling farther away. It is our choice.

This week, I am going to try to remember to *offer it up* when I am feeling discouraged or frustrated. I am going to try to focus on what a gift my life is each day and remember that it is *my choice* to use that gift to build a stronger relationship with the Lord or to fall away from Him. This week I am going to try harder to forgive instead of being frustrated when someone (perhaps unintentionally) hurts my feelings.

Maybe you too have experienced situations like I have described. Maybe you are better at not complaining than I am, but if you occasionally find yourself grumbling about something you have to do, I would invite you to try with me next week to change your perspective. Offer it up! Remember, God gave us free-will and we have the choice to deepen our relationship with him through our actions or to hurt Him by our actions and thoughts.

Remember, our Lord knows our heart.

In Christ+

Lorrie Conway
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