

Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

Ripples in a Pond # 12

Ripples in a Pond

Our Covenant with our Blessed Mother should inspire us to be apostolic. The Church today needs active and “contagious” Christians. We are living in a time – here and now – when we need a vibrant and life-transforming Catholicism. If we look around us, we don’t always get the feeling that this is actually the case. We have today different types of Catholicism: We need a colourful Catholicism – not a boring beige Catholicism, we need a spicy Catholicism and not a bland version; we need a concrete faith and not an abstract faith. If you want an example of someone who lived the colourful, spicy and concrete version, then take the time to read about *Dorothy Day*, the great founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. This woman prayed in front of the Blessed Sacrament, attended daily Mass, took frequent retreats, spoke in a very pious language, and accepted without any problems the dogmas of the Church, but at the same time, lived with the poor, opposed any and every war, sharply criticized the economic status quo, and advocated a “radical Catholicism”. She was a “rebel with a cause”, who made Jesus Christ in all his concreteness the centre of her life. She really lived out the unambiguous message and life-style of Jesus. Prayer for her, for example, was not a retreat into a unreal world. It was the way to remain centred in Christ, particularly in the day t day life and work. It is the way to remain anchored. Dorothy day is a call to you and me to embrace the spicy, troublesome, concrete, fascinating, colourful and culture-transforming person of Jesus Christ.

It was Dorothy Day who could say that everything that a baptized Catholic does should be either directly or indirectly related to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. She is saying that real Christian love has a concrete form. It is not a bland abstraction about being kind or just, but rather a set of very concrete things to do. Christian love is giving food to the hungry (yes, that means the hungry person standing at the door of Tesco’s); it means sheltering the homeless (yes, that is the person who knocks on the Parish House door); it

means visiting the sick (yes, that means the disable child living on your street); it means counselling the doubtful (yes, that teenager in your family struggling with his faith and doesn’t go to Mass or confession); and it means bearing patiently the troublesome (yes, that means the annoying neighbour).

Father Kentenich’s charisma is another example of the antidote to “beige Catholicism”. He often encouraged his listeners and challenged his listeners to be people who get involved in the issues and trends of our times in a creative way. He said: “*None of us is allowed to die, unless he or she leaves a huge vacuum behind. None of us is allowed to die, unless people notice that a key-person is missing.*”

If you throw a pebble in a pond, it creates ripples that go further and further out. Every Catholic living the Covenant should be someone who is like this pebble and creates “ripples” of faith and values around them. We no longer have the luxury to stand with our arms folded and let it all happen without us. We cannot stand at the side-lines of history. Many would have the satisfaction if the Church is marginalized. However, Catholics throughout history have always been a force to be reckoned with – if we weren’t “dangerous”, then why are Catholics martyred all over the world?

Questions for Reflection

1. How would you understand the term “apostolate”?
2. Give a concrete area where you could be apostolic?
3. What do you think of the witness of Dorothy Day?
4. How does the Covenant of Love help you to be apostolic?

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