

To Quench His Thirst

The stories tell us that during the Feast of St. Mark around 1467, onlookers saw a mysterious cloud descending on the local Church dedicated to Our Lady of Good Counsel. Music could be heard in the air and bells were ringing throughout the town and when the cloud departed from their sight, the beautiful icon of Mary tenderly holding onto her child Jesus appeared—the image of ‘Our Lady of Good Counsel’. The sick who came on pilgrimage to this image were miraculously healed, the desolate were given immense consolation and even the papal commission sent to verify this supernatural event found 171 miracles associated with this image.

But beyond the miraculous origin of this image of our Lady of Good Counsel, what COUNSEL does Mary have for us and for the CWL for whom this is their patron?

Today as always, Mary is presenting Jesus to us and urges us to “Do whatever he tells you”.

What is Jesus telling us today in the Gospel?

Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master... If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

What are ‘these things’ that he is talking about? Today’s Gospel is made more clear in light of its previous context. The scene is set at the Last Supper where Jesus just finished washing the feet of his disciples, and he said:

If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

This is the path to true blessedness, true holiness: service to one another in imitation of our Master, and—providentially—this is what the CWL has intuited as part of their mission statement to be “*rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God.*”

But what makes our service different from others?

We must keep in mind that Christians are not mere social workers in the world; Christians are contemplatives in the world seeking to minister to Jesus present

among the poor in distressing disguise. Our service to the Lord in the poor should be intimately united with our contemplation of the Lord in our prayer.

In fact, **it is through our intimate prayer with Jesus** that we truly SEE the FULL DIGNITY of our brothers and sisters in need.

Mother Teresa explains:

*“I worry some you still have not really met Jesus—one to one—you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in chapel—but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love?...**until you can hear Jesus in the silence of your own heart, you will not be able to hear Him saying ‘I thirst’ in the hearts of the poor**”.*

Once we know in the depths of our heart **‘the heart wrenching thirst’** that Jesus has for us personally in the Eucharist, *we then realize our dignity as one who is loved and desired by the infinite God.*

We realize further that Jesus thirsts for us in the poor. This all consuming love we have received is not meant for us alone, but like a blazing fire our hearts become beacons of love for others to quench the thirst of Jesus in the hearts of the poor.

One time a journalist was visiting Mother Teresa and her sisters as they were tending the sick. This journalist came across a patient whose ulcers produced such a foul smelling odor that he exclaimed, *“I would never do anything like this—even for a million dollars!”* Mother Teresa then looked with tender love upon the man with the smelly ulcers and smiled: ***“Yes, for a million dollars, I wouldn’t do it either.”***

Mother Teresa was motivated **not by money or vanity but by one ideal: to quench the thirst of Jesus in the poor hidden in distressing disguise.**

Let us heed the example of Mother Teresa who listened to the ‘good counsel’ of Lady. Mary urges us to do what our Lord beckons: to seek him in the Eucharist in SACRAMENTAL DISGUISE so as to recognize him among the poor in DISTRESSING DISGUISE so that our holiness through service is fueled by holiness through prayer.