Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

August 13, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



“As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:16).

Josh 24:14-29; Matt 19:13-15

Right after Jesus defends the stability of marriage, he welcomes a group of children and lays his hands on them and prays. In doing this he affirms that children are one reason parents should remain together to create a secure life for them. Domestic conflict and divorce clearly disrupt the development of children and deprive them of trustworthy models for adult maturity and responsibility. How often children of divorce have trouble entrusting themselves to committed relationships. This is not to say that separation is not necessary in some marriages, only that stability is a proven blessing.

The disciples try to keep the children and their mothers from “bothering” Jesus, but he welcomes and embraces the children. At that time (and now in many places), children were often regarded as non-persons, unimportant except as cheap labor or of future benefit if they survived to adulthood. Jesus makes them models of innocence and openness to God, who reveals his secrets to them while hiding them from the “wise and clever.” Because children are so vulnerable to neglect and abuse, they are precious in God’s sight, the ultimate *anawim*, or “little ones,” of the Beatitudes: meek, pure of heart, crying out for comfort, peace and justice. They are also models for the joy of the kingdom to come.

Society is judged by how it cares for its most vulnerable members. The welfare of children, the elderly, sick and disadvantaged is the measure of civilization and economic balance in the system. Where money and power serve only the rich and

the privileged, the future is being bartered away to special interests while the common good is undermined. No society can long survive this lack of foresight or basic fairness, and everyone suffers in the end. Climate change is only one example of nature’s rebuke on society for its short-term greed and blindness.

Politicians who tolerated decades of deficits now warn that inflation will cripple the economy if tax money is directed to infrastructure, working people, women and to children, who do not vote or count in the great equations of wealth and power. History will judge current budget priorities as either a foolhardy experiment or a daring gamble on a renewed democracy for all. Some religious leaders do not hesitate to invoke Jesus politically or as only a spiritual guide, but if we let him speak for himself, he is saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for the reign of God belongs to such as these.”

Advertisement