Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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March 15, 2022
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“You do not know what you are asking” (Matt 20:22).

Jer 18:18-20; *Mt 20:17-28*

Indeed, the mother of James and John, prompted by her sons’ ambitions, does not know what she is asking when she presses Jesus to place them on his right and left in his kingdom. Jesus has just told the group that when they arrive in Jerusalem he will be arrested, mocked and executed. On his right and left will be two thieves, crucified with him.

During Lent, we pray to fulfill our Christian vocations. Do we know what we are asking? To be baptized is to enter into the Paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection. We do not know how this will happen, but we are asking for it.

For most of us, our dying with Christ will not be dramatic or public, as it was for most of the Apostles, and for many other martyrs down through history. But the daily dying to self by serving others, surrendering our time, energy, personal preferences to respond to the needs of others, is sure to happen. Such self-emptying defines the lives of parents, teachers, social workers, ministers of all kinds, and anyone who consciously says “Yes” to God each morning: “Here I am, I have come to do your will.”

Martyrdom, or witness, big M or little m, is built into Christian discipleship. Once we decide to follow Jesus, we open ourselves to his daily invitation to lay down our lives for others. For most, it will be ordinary, cumulative and anonymous. But God sees

the heart, and God knows who is available for service in any given moment or circumstance. Be ready. Today may be your day to say, “Yes, I knew exactly what I was asking for.”

Reprinted from 2015

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