

## 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

**Matthew 10: 29-30.** Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted.



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This verse jumped out at me because it speaks of our Father's care for us and his knowledge of our comings and goings and our ultimately our passing from this world. I can relate to that in the context of my ministry down at the abortion clinic because a lot of times you encounter a lot of hostility. People don't want to be challenged as to what they're doing – the fact that they're taking an innocent life. A lot of times the boyfriends or the husbands get very belligerent; they get right in your face. I've been threatened a number of times. They say they're going to come back and shoot you!

So, you're in a dilemma. What do you do? Do you tuck your tail and run or do you stand your ground? This verse really speaks to that. The Father is there. He knows the situation. Saints in the past have faced adversity and resistance from those that do not want to know the truth. They've ultimately been maimed, killed, or become martyrs. It came down to making a decision. Am I willing to give my life or become injured for the sake of these unborn children? That's what it really comes down to.

I've decided to take that risk. Come what may, I'm not going to let threats of violence deter me and what I think is the right course to follow. I think this verse speaks to that. It speaks about the Father's care. He knows that I'm putting my life on the line and that's very comforting. His presence is with me and with all of us facing it down there.

The Holy Spirit has given me the gift of courage. I was away from the faith in my teen years. I studied different religions. When I made the decision to come back to the Catholic Church I took my faith very seriously and I prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of your will."

Things started happening. I started getting inspired to witness to people. When I worked at Windmill Place the prostitutes would hang out there. A lot of times I would get this thought while I was going home in my car: "Go witness to them. Tell them about the Lord." I resisted that. I said, "No, that's not me. No way am I going to go up to them, let alone a prostitute!"

But for a whole week that thought kept coming to me. It said, "Just go talk to them." So, I worked up the courage and the Lord wore me down! So I said, "OK, Lord if this is from you and it's been so persistent and so strong of a thought coming into my heart and into my head, OK, I'll try it." So, when you take your faith seriously it will stretch you. It will take you into places where you don't want to go, or where you've never thought of going. It's up to us to say "Yes, Lord!" And I'm honest

about my feelings. I know I'm not comfortable there, but this is a stretch. It's a good thing!

A lot of times I've found that when I do step out, I get just as much blessing from taking the risk and reaching out to others and talking about the Lord than the people I talk to. It's a mutual blessing. The verses from Scripture just come alive when you take that step and do something that you've never done before.

Since I've come back to my faith and taken it seriously and cultivated a prayer life, I'll see someone on the sidewalk and I'll say, "Hey, do you know the Lord? Are you a Christian?" Just to try to get them thinking about it. I never would have done that stuff before. If I'm in a situation and there is a chance for some conversation I'll eventually come to talk about Spiritual matters just to see where they are and get people thinking about things if they're not Christian.

Here's another example of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I was driving around and all of a sudden this feeling of the love of God came over me. I saw this guy out mowing his lawn. I felt that I should stop and talk to this guy about God, but, you know, I'd never done anything like that, so I went on my way. The thought stayed with me and my spirit felt troubled that I didn't listen to this inspiration.

So, I turned around and went back. I went by this guy's house a couple times. He was still out there and I thought "Gee, should I do this or not? It's kind of 'out there', you know? I didn't know this guy from Adam!" So, I finally pulled into the driveway and he came over to the car. I said, "How're you doing?" Then I explained why I was there. I said, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "Yes." So I told him that I had felt this flowing of the love of God toward him. He said, "Funny you should mention that. My wife just lost her brother and we'll be leaving to go to his funeral." I said, "Well, just tell her that I felt the love of God coming to you both. I didn't know what to expect when I came to talk to you, but I'm just telling you what I felt." He said, "Well, I'll tell that to her because she could use some comforting. Thank you for sharing that inspiration with us."

I drove away feeling good and I hope that it did some good. I'm amazed at what the Lord has led me to. Sometimes I say, "OK, Lord, that's enough!" St. Paul says that if we ever think we're at the end of our spiritual growth, think again! It's a constant refinement if we're open to it.

*If you would like further information with regard to Pregnancy Services or Natural Family Planning, please contact the parish offices at 653-2377. St. John Parish welcomes those who would like to assist with the parish video system. Please call 653-2377 for further information.*