



Homily for  
THE TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
28/29 May, 2016

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**Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....**

I. I would guess just about everyone has seen the TV show, "What would you do?"

I believe it is carried by CNN. The show poses various moral situations and observes bystanders' reactions. For example, actors may be

- in a booth in a restaurant loudly and publically scolding a child, or
- a customer may be verbally abusing a waitress
- one time I saw an episode where a pharmacist was loudly announcing the ailments of customers and publically explaining how to use the medication...
- another episode I saw was about parents leaving children alone at a playground...

It is very interesting to watch the reaction of bystanders:

- some quickly move away from the situation and get out of there
- some feel sympathetic, but say nothing
- others might elicit the assistance of another bystander or a manager
- some will directly confront the perpetrator

It would really be interesting to know the percentage of people who actually do take some kind of proactive response...my guess is that it would be a small percentage.

II. It is certainly not always easy to know what to do. Our litigious society would cause many of us to be very hesitant about getting involved...we may tell ourselves it is none of my business...we may fear the commitment it might require of us...or we just don't like conflict situations. As we watch a program like, "What would you do?" we may feel we wish, or we would, do something more proactive, but to actually do it can be very challenging.

Of course, as disciples of Jesus, we are always called to move out of our comfort zones. Being a disciple of Jesus means we are called to stand up for life – which is really what these scripture readings are about today.

In both the first reading from First Kings and the gospel – Elijah and Jesus restore life. Each one restores the life of a dead son and in doing so they are also restoring the life of a widow – because in their culture the son, the husband or the brother of a woman was their care taker. Without that caretaker, the woman was pushed to the fringes of society.

Both Elijah and Jesus violated a taboo by touching a dead body. To do so would be to make them unclean. This was especially true of Jesus: as he entered the city he could have looked up at the funeral procession and then simply walked on by. But instead, he was moved with pity and reached out to her saying, "Do not weep." He sought to console her and then he restored the young man to life.

This was a pattern in Jesus' life: he reached out to the poor...he took special care

to pay attention to women and children...he challenged the wealthy to trust in God and not their material possessions...he called upon religious leaders to be people of integrity...he was not worried about risking ritual impurity. Jesus was a staunch defender of life.

### III. What are the issues in our lives in which we can be more proactive?

- always we must defend the most vulnerable children in the womb...help prospective parents to be proud and responsible parents...teach the evil of abortion...support first time parents
- defending life might mean being observant about how children are cared for. Do you ever see children neglected? Left alone? Unsupervised? Do you see children who do not have good role models? Are you aware of any way in which children are abused?
- defense of life might extend to the care of our elderly. Do you know of elderly who are alone? Who have no one to check in on them? Do they get adequate nutrition? Are their medical needs being taken care of? Do they need help with care of their home? If they are in a care facility are they getting the care they need and deserve? Who will speak up for them?
- obviously life issues go on and on...a confused, discouraged teenager...an immigrant or new comer to the neighborhood...someone who has recently lost a job...someone newly divorced...anyone who somehow is in a precarious or dangerous or risky situation. They become vulnerable and often times are in need of someone who will advocate for them – who will bring them to greater life.

IV. St. Paul talks about his own journey from being a fervent Jew, fixed only on his worldview, a persecutor of Christians to being a passionate preacher of the Gospel. Paul was open to moving out of his comfort zone and adapting all that Jesus stood

for and preached. St. Paul gives us a model of what it looks like to include all into the way of Christ.

It is not easy to move in that direction – but being a defender of life, standing up

human dignity of each person is what we are called to do as a disciple of Jesus. Our scripture readings today ask us to consider, “What would you do?”

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### **Fr. Kyle’s homily follows....**

Facing difficulties and challenges is just a fact of life. The big question is how do we react when we are facing these difficulties, what do we do when facing crosses in life. Lord, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. This serenity prayer can help us in how to react when we face difficulties or crosses.

Today’s 3 readings give us three examples of people who reacted differently to God when they faced their own cross.

1. In our first reading, a widow’s son has become sick and stopped breathing. Her reaction: she asks why this is happening to her and she blames God. But she doesn’t give up. By the power of God Elijah is able to heal the child.
2. In the second reading, Paul recalls how he used to be a Jew dealing with the new Christians cramping his style. His reaction: out of fear he persecuted and killed the Christians. But he doesn’t give up. By the power of God’s grace his heart is converted and he becomes a great saint.
3. In the gospel we hear about a single Mother whose only son has died. Her reaction: sorrow and despair. But she does not give up. By the power of Jesus her son is brought back to life again.

What are areas of life that we struggle with: Illness, addiction, the death of a loved one, family struggles? More importantly, how do we react to these struggles and crosses? Do we blame God? Do we lash out in fear? Do we despair and give up?

We cannot control the fact that we will face difficulties and challenges. But we can change how we react to these. It is natural to ask “why me?” It is natural to be afraid. It is natural to despair and give up. It is supernatural to trust in God. It is supernatural to persevere. It is supernatural to hope in God when all seems lost.

Lord, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. As we face the struggles and crosses of our life may we react with faith in God and never give up.