

JPIC: Love the Lord, Love His Kingdom, Love the Earth Here I am, Lord. Send me!

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Not so very long ago I was taking my daily walk. Up ahead of me, close enough to see but too far away to be certain of any details, I saw a person fall off of a bike. Within a second, I saw no fewer than twelve people running toward him from all directions. And, within seconds, he was on his feet, and one could hear the distant sound of the paramedics racing to him.

As I got closer, I could see that he was a young man. But none of the twelve helpers around him could have known that when they ran to him. They did not know if he was male or female, young or old, white, black, Asian, North American, Spanish speaking, English, French, Korean speaking, or any of the many languages we hear around us every day. He was a human down and needing help. They responded. Praise Be to God, he was fine and graciously thanking his helpers all around him. I wept and weep still as I am telling you this story.

God builds this in us, sisters and brothers, I am certain. We see someone in distress, it awakens our hearts, our awakened hearts awaken compassion, and compassion animates us. We act. Sometimes it is a person in distress, sometimes an animal. It is alive to us and reveals the trace or vestige or image of God to us and we act. Is this not the definition of mercy?

Of course, there are characteristics within us that may inhibit this response: responsible self-preservation, physical limitations, or social pressures. It reminds us of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Some scholars have offered that the priest and the Levite would have been made ritually unclean and therefore unable to perform their religious duties if they had touched the man by the side of the road and he were dead. Others have suggested that they may have just been in a hurry! It reminded me of another story in which seminarians at a School of Theology were being tested on homiletics. The text was the Parable of the Good Samaritan and they were told if they were late for class they would fail. They did not know they were part of a social experiment and that the fallen person on the side of the path to their classroom was a researcher who later reported that the majority of Seminarians did not stop, despite the almost duplicate facts to the Parable upon which they were about to preach. They told the researcher they did not want to fail their class!

We all have “reasons” for not acting, sisters and brothers. But let us be sure our reasons will satisfy our Lord who has sent us to be his disciples. Let us remember the words of our Beloved Saint Francis – “for up to now we have done very little.”

Here I am, Lord. Send me.

Peace and All Good

Patricia Grace, JPIC Animator