

Homily for Dorothy Simpson

You are Chosen – Loved – Holy Words from Paul's letter to the Colossians

I believe the readings for today serve as a template for how Dorothy lived her life.

They may even give a glimpse into her spirituality

The spiritual practices listed in Paul's letter to the Colossians are clear instructions for living a whole, holy life.

His letter serves as a reminder that we like the Colossians, though not perfect, are loved and chosen with potential for holiness.

We are called to clothe ourselves in kindness and compassion with hearts of love.

Called to live with integrity, gentleness, and open hearts witnessing love and gratitude.

Called to forgive as we have been forgiven, allowing peace to rule over our hearts, minds and actions.

Called to do what we can do with warmth, compassion, hospitality and care.

Simply put,

Making love visible in our actions, seeing divinity in one another, knowing that what we do for others we do for ourselves in the process.

No matter what we do we can make it - ministry.

No matter the form - we have the opportunity to bring love to the universe in simple acts of kindness, compassion and patience.

Kindness encompasses acts of love and generosity naturally flowing out of empathy, hospitality and words that lift another's spirit.

Together we bring harmony, goodness and unity to our world when our actions are accompanied with hearts of love.

We live moments of grace as holy ones, mentors and guides demonstrate spiritual practices for us. Was Dorothy not such a guide for many.

Like pebbles cast into a pond, creating ripples that spread in all directions our acts of service become an ever widening circle of compassion. Every activity we stretch beyond ourselves on behalf of others is a lived prayer.

Quoting Fredrich Burchner.

‘ The life we touch for good or ill will touch another life and in turn another until who knows where the tumbling stops or in which place our touch is felt.’

How our simple acts are felt are beyond imaging. We bless unknowingly.

As an illustration I would like to share a simple act observed during Dorothy’s final days.

Each night a caregiver would come in at the beginning of her shift.

She would lightly kiss Dorothy’s forehead saying “I came in for some sugar”.

Dorothy, unknowingly, gave the caregiver a blessing and strength to begin another long night of caring for others. Both blessed in the simple act.

In her sweet – determined way Dorothy continued her ministry .

As she lost language she maintained her ability to touch the hearts of others.

She sang her song and affirmed others with simple words,

such as 'you are beautiful' .

One recipient said ' Who now will tell me I am beautiful?'

When words failed, music and song was the gift Dorothy offered with a full heart.

Paul would approve.

Everything contributes to our journey toward wholeness.

In a world of abundant wonders and mystery we celebrate unity and harmony

as we strive to be content with mysteries that cannot be explained or solved.

We trust the movement of the Spirit in our lives.

In the reading from John the words of practical Martha, a woman of faith,

who trusted in the promise of New Life- Resurrection

speak to us of trust, faith and hope.

Dorothy, also a woman of faith, lived life with hope and gratitude

trusting in the goodness of God.

She presented her sweet determination even in her final hours.

All was according to her own time.

Like Martha, Dorothy had a dedication to the service of others

but her spirit was balanced with the faithfulness of the contemplative Mary

who shares in the story of Lazarus.

Some say faith is a path of the heart
that enables us to perceive the mysterious meaning of life.
At times, it is faith that aides us to confront and overcome obstacles
we encounter.

Writers can speak of faith in serious, sometimes somber terms.
I would like to share an adapted version of one who wrote of faith
in a lighter vane.....

'faith is a simple thing
It cannot talk - but only sing – as Dorothy sang
It cannot reason- but can dance - as Dorothy danced
,,, All unknowingly we trace a geography of grace
From breath to breath and blink to blink
It's never quite the way we think' (Al Carmines)

May we live with faith
May we see through eyes of love
May we hold kindness and compassion as guiding stars
May Dorothy continue to touch our hearts.
And may each know – You are Chosen, Holy and Loved.

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