



Change the World... Seriously!

THE LAUNCH PAD FOR "GO FORTH"

For many, the once comfy world many took for granted has become a frightening place, saturated with evil. No need to look any further than your usual news haunts – replete with the horror du jour, scandals aplenty (even in our Church), and nearly endless destructive gossip, rumors and misinformation. Tragedy upon tragedy!

What an insidious trap it can be, and how easy it is to become discouraged, if not outright depressed, creeping towards despair. How large an adversary, this quaking blob, and how infinitely small we can feel.

Can we honestly play a meaningful part in helping to rebuild The City of God? Can we even make the most minuscule of dents?

Take a deep breath. You don't have to give up on thinking big, but keep it simple. Keep it so simple, in fact, that you could easily slap it on a bumper sticker: *"Do the little you can right in front of you."* Or, *"take the next right step,"* if you prefer.

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like."

– St. Augustine of Hippo

IT'S O.K. TO THINK BIG

Want to change the world? It's perfectly natural to be concerned for our brethren at home and abroad, and the hardness of hearts choking the life out of it. It's Catholic. Empathy for suffering, concern for the needs of others, and a heroic amount of compassion is perfectly Catholic. What does distance matter, or a poor understanding of other cultures (even our own). Distance and different cultures don't make anyone less human, or their suffering less horrible.

Seeing our Christian brothers and sisters persecuted and brutally murdered in too many parts of the world should grieve us. Knowing how abortion has proliferated should horrify us. Child trafficking, drugs and sex crimes break our hearts. Suppression of liberty and freedom is an outrage. We see, hear, and are aware of these things, and yet, we should not constantly bombard our heads with evil news and dwell on this stuff.

Change the World... Seriously! *(continued)*

THINK LOCAL

Once we're committed to lending our talents to rebuilding The City of God together, what comes next? Well, look no further than the Gospel. What was Jesus' method? How about His imitators? The Saints?

Jesus didn't travel around the world. He worked with the folks right in front of him. Walking from town to town, visiting town square after town square, going door to door, ministering from person to person. Up close and personal. Jesus tirelessly shared, taught, preached, listened, healed, forgave, cast out demons... everything that directed attention to The Kingdom of God. Born in the little town of Bethlehem, reared in Nazareth, crucified in Jerusalem... and yet the fruits of His work are still available to us all.

Consider the saints, many of whom never left the small confines of their dioceses, towns and monasteries. It didn't diminish the fruit of their service and sufferings one iota, even if relegated to the smallest of spaces. Their impact remains to this day throughout the universal Church.

All holiness is ultimately local. While it is good to feel compassion resulting from our often excessive news consumption, we are first and foremost called to serve those right in front of us. We may not be able to stop the next persecution, but we can certainly exercise patience, choosing to lavish kindness on that irritating person behind us in the check-out line. We may not be able to fix the healthcare system, but we can surely share our faith with the struggling family member or curious friend. We may not be able to stop abortion, but we can forgive that once loyal friend who wronged us grievously in a fit of weakness.

Living the Gospel is personal – from one person to another. Sure, you can send that payment to yet another GoFundMe page, and continue to feel compassion for folks you will never meet – if you want to make living the Gospel really easy. Of course, living the Gospel is not easy at all. It requires choosing hard. It's the costly work of loving and sacrificing for those right in our midst, and likely the people we wouldn't choose to tend to first. And yet, those are the very people God put in our path.

HOW LONG UNTIL THE DISTRACTIONS AND EXCUSES ARE EXHAUSTED?

If God obliged you by giving you the definitive answer to that news story you're attempting to plumb the depths of, what would really change? Is it sanctifying or detrimental? Be honest with yourself. The next time you get sucked into the news only to find yourself discouraged, annoyed, or angry, let it be the catalyst to get you moving on your quest to change the world from the very spot that God has placed you. Look no further. I guarantee that you'll find the opportunity to serve Him right then and there.



Change the World... Seriously! *(continued)*

BUT I'M SUPER BUSY

"Never mistake activity for achievement."

-- John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach

BUT I AM INTENT ON STUFF THAT MATTERS

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

-- Philippians 4:8

I'LL JUST STICK TO MY WAY

Pilate retorted, *"What is truth?"*

-- John 18:38