

Where is Each Person's God-Given Mission Born?

I remember once in a homily I heard back in 1991, the much revered Fr. Thomas Dubay say, "Friends, you don't have a mission, you ARE a mission! God made each of you to tell a story, to speak a word, to paint a picture of what He is like. What you do must flow from who you truly are. So know who you are and then be who you are!"

Your mission from God is born with you, planted deep in your heart as a living seed that needs to be diligently cultivated. That seed contains all of your latent potential awaiting discovery and development—your gifts and talents, your temperament and desires, your weaknesses and your limitations. There is such beauty in knowing that nothing of who we are—good *or* bad—is wasted by God. If we give it to Him, it all becomes part of our God-given purpose in life.

But to know who you truly are, in the deepest sense, you must know *who God is* since you were created to be His unrepeatable image and His unique child. You were "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be your way of life" (cf. Eph. 3:10). We are to co-work with God, and St. Paul gets quite specific on what that entails:

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. So fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, foolish talk, and crude humor; but instead, let there be thanksgiving." (Eph. 5:1-4)

Like Fr. Dubay, Pope Francis said, "Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel." One implication of this is that none of us can truly discover our life mission *without knowing the Gospel*, without coming to a personal knowledge of the only true image of God, Jesus Christ. Only in prayerfully reflecting on God's Word in the Bible, and seeing ourselves in its light, can we come to know the mind of Christ. And so live out our mission.

I have a friend who has served for many years as a prison chaplain. He discovered his mission to the incarcerated after he was invited to visit death row inmates while he was still a seminarian. As he prayed that night after his visit, a scene from the movie *The Passion of the Christ* haunted his imagination. It's the scene right after Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, when He is chained underground in the Temple prison. In that moment of prayer, my priest friend said, "Seeing Christ in chains, my priestly mission to the incarcerated was awakened. But it wasn't as something brand new being introduced to me. It was something I knew to be already in me, awakened by that encounter between the faces of those condemned men and the Face of the condemned Christ."

Be the mission you are by prayerfully discovering the good work you were created to do in Christ Jesus.



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