DO SMALL THINGS FOR GOD

“We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” - St. Teresa of Calcutta

Recently, I listened to a lecture about the Incarnation. What struck me about the professor’s talk is how she emphasized that we often want God to work in big ways, yet He chooses to work in the small. Perhaps, because we are not able to process or understand His mighty deeds if He were to reveal them all at once. For example, the Jewish people expected a Messiah that would be a mighty king, yet God came as an infant. They thought He would be a mighty ruler that conquers enemies in this world, yet He died on a cross to conquer sin. And rather than telling His disciples plainly who He was at the very beginning of His public ministry, He allows them to discover this truth on their own, with St. Peter’s confession, “‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,’” (Matthew 16:16 NABRE).

Yes, God often works in small ways that over time reveal his grandeur, and help us further understand that His ways are not our ways. He chooses to work as leaven, changing things slowly over time, rather than all at once. Instead of assembling an army during His time on earth, He chose twelve ordinary men, spent three years with them, then entrusted the mission of His church to them. Now, the Gospel has been heard all around the world and the church has a presence on every continent.

So what can we learn from this for our families and our homes? I think it relates to the teachings of St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Teresa of Calcutta, that for God to truly be present in our homes, we need to perform small acts of charity day-in and day-out.
I invite you this Lent to think of one act of charity you can start regularly doing in your home that you may not do right now. I’ll think about the same myself. It could be taking a chore off your spouse’s plate, saying an extra prayer for your children, or spending a little bit more time with them before they go to sleep. These small acts can seem insignificant, but God can do so much with our small acts of kindness.

I don’t know about you, but as I look back on my own faith journey, it wasn’t the “big” moments when God really spoke to me. It was in the small moments, in conversations, in small acts of kindness, and in the quietness of prayer. For example, I’ll never forget something the first pastor that I worked for did that greatly impacted me. It wasn’t something big, and he probably doesn’t even know it effected me. But one time in his office, we were on a call together, and he held the phone over for me to listen for a long period of time. I know he must have been tired after a very long day, but he made that extra effort to show me how much he cared that I was part of this conversation. Those little things make such a big difference!

What is a small act of kindness someone demonstrated to you that has impacted your faith journey? I invite you to think about it, and maybe even thank that person for it, or at least say a prayer for them.

What is one small act of kindness you can start making daily in your home? Before you stop reading this article, I invite you to make a decision on what it will be, then try to do it over the course of Lent. After forty days, it may very well become a habit!

Let us never forget that each little act must be done with love, not as a mere obligation. This is when God can really use and multiply our efforts. As St Therese of Lisieux said, “Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing.” She was echoing St. Paul, who wrote, “If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Perhaps one final exercise this Lent would be to read the next four verses in that same letter from Paul that define love. Are we living that? Are we patient, kind, and not quick-tempered? If so, St. Paul promises we will bear, believe, and hope all things.

Until next time, I hope you enjoyed this article and can implement one small act of charity in your home. If you ever need anything at all, please contact me at 361-573-0828 x 2665 or jreyes@victoriadiocese.org. God Bless!

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All for the Sacred and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, all through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, all in union with St. Joseph. Amen.