

The Word of Life - August 12th, 2016

Usually, I take note of the age of the particular saint whom we remember on a given day, especially when they made life changing choices. Like Saint Clare who, at 19, was attracted to following Christ through the preaching of St. Francis of Assisi and went to live in a Benedictine monastery. At 22 she founded the Poor Clares along with her sister Beatrice and her mother! Nice start for a community!

We have access to the same loving Father, and the Body and Blood of His Son. It is a matter of, daily, praying in so many words: *“God, I offer myself to you to build with me and to do with me as You will. May I do Your Will always. Show me how to live.”* (Adaption from the Third Step Prayer of AA)

I am also aware of our Baptismal anointing to become *“priests, prophets and kings (royalty, for women).”* Today’s ‘Wordly’ challenge from Ezekiel is a reference to our baptismal calling: *“Mortal make known to Jerusalem her abominations.”* What follows is a rather vivid description of a new born female infant left totally abandoned, with the “navel cord uncut.” Nor is the infant washed with water or cleansed. Neither is it rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in cloths.” In this sorry, pitiful state, Our Lord God adopted her and she became his. The child grew to be beautiful, fit to be a queen. Lo the beauty led to fame and she became the source of selfish pleasure for many. Not what the Father intended.

I relate this to the present “empire” which our country actually has grown to be, an abomination and a source of pleasure and profit. It produces violence through profit throughout the world. We secure profit for the protection of the powerful by our arms defense systems. We are the largest arms agency in the world, and we profit greatly. It is now beyond our control as the world war of terror dominates.

Recently a world-wide committee of 80 people from 25 nations met at the Vatican for the first ever conference to discuss formally abandoning the so-called Just War Theory and formally returning the Church to the non-violence of Jesus.

Personally, I have had to put nonviolence at the forefront of what I talk about and preach about, because it is so “lost” in the weeds of Catholic theology. From those “weeds” we discover that, 1) Jesus was consistently non-violent, 2) that there is no just war and we should never again invoke the so-called Just War Theory, 3) that non-violence is a methodology for positive social change that works, whether in our personal lives, in communities and within nations; and, 4) that the time has come for the church to apply non-violence at every level.

This has not meant to be a prayerful meditation but rather a prayerful plea to look deeply at the meaning of forgiveness which is rooted in non-violence.

Fr. Alex Steinmiller, C.P.