

Fr. O'Connor's Homily - September 23, 2018

You've probably heard this song before but let me sing you a few lines.

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Be they yellow, black or white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the children of the world.

I thought about this song when I read about Jesus embracing the child in today's Gospel.

One day a woman and her child, along with her sister, went into a diner for breakfast. When the waitress came to take the order, the mother's sister went first. Then the mother placed her order and then began ordering for her son. But the waitress interrupted and said, "And you little boy, what will you have?" He answered, "Waffles and bacon." The waitress turned to the short order cook and called out, "Waffles and bacon." The boy was amazed and said to his mother, "Mommy, she thinks I'm real."

Does it amaze you that the disciples didn't get it when Jesus said that he would be killed? Instead they went on to discuss who was the greatest among them. What would this have been like for Jesus? Brutal!

His response was so simple, so clear, so profound. He placed a child in their midst, held out his arms around the child and proclaimed, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me."

Then did they get it? And us... How hard is it for us to get this message of Jesus! Do we ever get it? Just what is this message?

In another place Jesus says, "Unless you change and become like little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom."

It's difficult to get it. Whatever does He mean? It's hard to change and become like a little child.

After a very humiliating experience, Oscar Wilde, an Irish playwright wrote, "How else but through suffering can God enter the human heart?"

Of course we don't go out looking for suffering. It surely comes our way and is the stuff of conversion, but not without prayer.

So what does it mean to change and become a little child?

Edith Stein was a brilliant woman- a philosopher and an atheist. She became a university professor in Germany prior to World War II. But through a long process, including reading the works of St. Teresa of Avila, she was attracted to the Catholic Church and eventually became a cloistered Carmelite nun.

With the rise of Hitler, her life in Germany was in danger. She went to a monastery in Holland with her sister. Eventually they were found out and sent to a Concentration Camp. When the Gestapo came for her she said to her sister, "We go for our people." (of course the Jews)

Through this terrible humiliation she was reduced to a little child.

What is the humiliation that will lead you, I, us, to become a little child?

Don't worry. It will be provided. Pray for awareness! Pray for strength!

We now unite ourselves to Jesus' cross and Resurrection in this Mass!

