



Like a Child

2nd Monday of Lent

Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

We were digging potatoes, my then-toddler-son and I, and he was thrilling in every rock and root he pulled from the soil, as much as he did the potatoes he found. After a while I grew impatient—there were important things to get done after this task—and I just wanted to be through with it, so I tried to help him see the distinction between potatoes and rocks, but still it didn't matter to him. What I failed to recognize and to enjoy with him was the joy in the discovery of nature's secrets. For me, it was just a job that needed to be done.

Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for a blessing, but the disciples, mindful of all that yet had to be done, attempted to send them away in order to save Jesus from a meaningless task. Jesus' response, however, was not a sigh of relief for being rescued from an onerous duty, but indignation that his disciples would turn children away. Rather than a distraction, Jesus tells them, they could learn from the example set by children, specifically the trust of children.

None of us merits or can ever merit a place in the kingdom of God. Keeping the rules, doing good works, or learning the code cannot grant us access. We enter into the circle of shared life with God by the gift of grace, God's grace to us in Christ. We take our place through trust in the one who invites us in and like children grow up, we too grow into maturity in the Christian life. In simple, trusting faith, we follow our Lord.

Prayer

O Lord, help me to live in you and to love you with childlike, trusting faith. Amen.