

Fifth Tuesday of Lent ~ 3/27

"So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am He, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him.' As Jesus was saying these things, many believed in Him." (John 8:28-30)

Jesus tells the people that He always pleases the Father. He tells them that He is so committed to respecting the will of the Father that He is prepared to die for Him. And it seems those who listened to Jesus were people that were looking for a leader who would be a person of deep integrity.

Sometimes integrity seems to be a scarce commodity in our world. People are starving for leaders who exhibit integrity but all one has to do is watch a political campaign to see how little integrity matters to the spin masters of the media. Campaign managers watch the polls in order to help their candidates decide what position to take. Some candidates tell us that they are opposed to this or in favor of that but when they are elected they never do anything that really moves the issue one way or the other. And on those rare occasions when we find someone who runs for office that is a person of integrity, too often he or she realizes that they are fighting upstream against other lawmakers who are playing the system for their own benefits. Eventually they step out of the political arena disillusioned and defeated. The political machines have jaundiced the eyes of the electorate to such a degree that voter turnout always struggles to overcome apathy. We long for a candidate who is more concerned with pleasing God than having power.

Fortunately there are people who hold themselves to a higher standard. There are those that respond to the urgings of their conscience. A soldier goes AWOL because he finds that he cannot follow orders to kill indiscriminately. An accountant refuses to turn a blind eye to the underhanded dealings of his boss. A child comes to the realization that the prejudice stance of his or her parents toward a person or group of people is wrong and confronts them on their position. In all of these cases the person did not please the one with authority over them. Or did they?

Politician, soldier, employee or child really must respond to only one authority, the authority of God. Maybe right now in our lives we do not find ourselves in conflict but there

will come a time when we will be asked to make a choice between pleasing God or pleasing the world around us. Pray on that day to make the choice for integrity. Be a beacon of hope for those around you.

Questions for Reflection

- 1. How do I evaluate people around me? Is integrity an important issue for me?*
- 2. Have I ever been in a position where following the will of God has been a choice that cost me friends or position? Was it worth it?*