

# THE DUTY OF THE MOMENT

**W**e are so busy these days. It's as if we are on a merry-go-round or roller coaster. Faster, faster, faster—that's us. We don't know if we're going forward, backward or which way. So here we are, living in a world that goes on all around us—more selfish, more greedy, more horrible than before. Faster, faster, faster it goes. But Christ said, "I have come to serve" (Mt 20:28), and so should we. Christ said, "Pray always." We should also. But how? How do we live in this world today? How do we serve? Well, the answer that I've seen, after 50 years of this lay apostolate, is to do the duty of the moment.

The duty of the moment is what you should be doing at any given time, in whatever place God has put you. If you have a child, your duty of the moment may be to change a dirty diaper. So you do it. But you don't just change that diaper, you change it to the best of your ability, with great love for both God and the child. Do you do it that way? You can see Christ in that child.

Or your duty of the moment may be to scrub your floors. Do you scrub your floors well? With great love for God? If not, do so. If you see to it that your house is well-swept, your food is on the table, and there is peace during meals, then there is a slow order that is established, and the immense tranquillity of God's order falls upon you and your family, all of you together.

Your doing the duty of the moment, your living the nitty-gritty, daily routine of ordinary life, can uncover the face of Christ in the marketplace. Christ can come

into the place where you work or play or eat. He will come into your home or into a restaurant. He will come into a school or a company cafeteria or a subway or wherever.

Let me give you an example. When I first came to North America, I had to support my sick husband and our baby, so I had a job as a waitress and that was my duty of the moment.

Well, there is a way of being a waitress and there is a way of being a waitress. Let me explain. It so happened that I was working at a restaurant near Wall Street in New York City and every day a very fat gentleman would come in and eat pies. He would eat loads of pies, half pies. So, one day, very quietly, I said to him, "You must love God very much, dear sir." Of course, he looked at me rather strangely. Can

you imagine anyone saying something like that? He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, you're eating so much of this pie, it will get you back to Him fast—before you know it." He looked at me and said, "What you're trying to tell me is that I'm committing suicide through my fork." I said, "Well, I wasn't going to put it that bluntly." I was about three inches away from him, and he looked at me and said, "Lady, you've got something there." And he gave me a five dollar tip. The next day he came in and said, "OK, what do I eat?" I said, "A salad."

So, you see, there is a way to be a waitress and there is a way to be a waitress. He said, "You show very much concern, not only to me, but to that gentleman over there too. He's so thin and you're always feeding him more." I said, "Well, I hope you do not object to my



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bringing religion into this situation. I believe in God and I believe that God said, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' So you're fat; I want to make you thin. He is thin; I want to make him fat. That, I think, is loving each other." He said, "Gee whiz. I must tell that to my wife."

I didn't preach, really. I didn't say I was Catholic or Protestant. I just said, "You're welcome."

So this is what I mean. You, as a Christian, as a follower of Christ, do your duty of the moment. Whatever your duty is, you do it with great love. And as you do, the image of Christ, the icon of Christ, will be shown to people wherever you are—in your home, in your place of work outside the home, in your school, in the neighborhood where you live, in your church, in the grocery store, wherever you happen to be.

Now, it's fine to say "Praise the Lord" and so forth, but remember that Christ said, "It's not the one who says 'Lord, Lord' who is going to heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father" (Mt 7:21). What's the will of the Father? It's so simple. It's the duty of the moment.

There are plenty of good things you can go out and do, programs and such, but whatever they are, you have to realize that there is always the duty of the moment to

be done. And it must be done, because the duty of the moment is the duty of God. It's what God calls us to do. And if we do it, do you realize what happens? People follow us. We don't have to preach by word of mouth. We preach by living. We preach by doing. We preach by being.

Now, how do you show the face of Christ to a world that is secular, atheistic, indifferent, greedy, and selfish? By doing what He asks you to do. And His voice is very simple. He says, "Love God with your whole life, your whole heart. And love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:38-39). Just do as He tells you. Live your life for everybody, and start with the duty of the moment.

When you do the duty of the moment, you do something for Christ. You make a home for Him in the place where your family dwells. You feed Him when you feed your family. You wash His clothes when you do their laundry. You help Him in a hundred ways as a parent. Then, when the time comes and you appear before Christ to be judged, He will say to you, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. I was sick and you looked after me" (Mt 25:35-36). Get the picture?

Compiled from the writings of Catherine Doherty.  
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