

Rejection and us

Our world today is often characterized by insignificant acts of refusing to accept goodness even when and where it is most needed; even when offered with humbling competence. The main reasons for rejection today can be tracked down to difference in religion, political affiliation, race, associations or competence due to over familiarization. Some people have also been rejected because of their success and goodness. How many times have we voted the wrong person to power because the right person is not in our political party? How many times have we refused people their rights because they don't look like "us", don't worship with "us" or they don't think like "us"? How many times have we refused a person because "we" don't like their friends? How many times have we refused to listen and accept advice from our spouse because his/her voice is too familiar to us?

It is very different when we reject people. The impactful question is: Have you been rejected before? Based on your experience of rejection, what do you think about rejection? How do you feel about your rejection? How did you handle it? It is in our suffering that we understand others' pain. The best healer is a wounded healer.

Today as Jesus returned for the first time to his own village since he began his ministry, he was rejected by his cousins, nephew, nieces, uncles and aunts. He was rejected by the people he knew, people he grew up with. He was rejected by the people who should have been his strength. They rejected him because he was no longer as weak and ignorant as they were. They rejected him because he had knowledge and power which he put into use in teaching them. In fact, they were offended by how good he turned out.

Devertenil is right; what happened is most familiar to many of us: "we achieve wonderful things far away from home – in another city, or perhaps in some other part of the world where we are not well known; then the time comes when we know we must return to our own country and teach there, and we find out that people at home do not see us in the same way." What does it mean to be amazed and still refuse to believe?

The simplest task before us today is how can we not reject the Jesus among us. How can we be able to extract some goodness even from the failures of those entrusted to us?

The good news is that progress and goodness is innate within us. Every human being has the rational ability to recognize goodness and has the choice to celebrate goodness with positive acknowledgement. Every rational human being has a good cultural training not to contain other human beings in one box of their own imagination, nor to measure people with one's own yard stick. But we are not just human beings, we are Christians, the bearers of good news.

Sometimes many members of our faith create a mold which one fits all. The error in that being we forget that God is the lover of creativity and variations. The concept that for a person to be a good prophet, minister and ambassador of Christianity, such a person must be distant from everyday life, exceptional in every way and extra-ordinary, is false and must be discarded.

Our relationship with God should not be anchored on those who are trained to explain it. Faith is the ability to retain the imagery that God encompasses us and that his goodness is greater than all our challenges, even more than we can comprehend. This message is more important than the messenger who bears it. He himself has his trials and tribulations to deal with. Most church leaders are wounded healers, anyway. Hence, for all the people of God, whether we are rejected, accepted or even celebrated, whether we are perfect or struggling with failure in everything, let us focus with humility and faith on the Lord of the work. He will guarantee the work of the Lord even in the face of rejection and abandonment.

How do you handle rejection?