

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jun 25th 2013

“How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life.” Matthew

A beautiful student sat in my office weeping because she had been caught cheating and failed a class where she had been struggling. The young woman is a good person who did something she deeply regrets because she felt desperate. I told her she was lucky that her professor had caught her.

I recalled the high school geometry test where I gave into this temptation for the only time in my life and got caught. Never mind that many of my classmates routinely cheated. I learned that I could never, ever take that risk again. It was one of the most valuable lessons I ever learned (although it still mortifies me to tell this story); I told my student that she eventually would feel the same about this incident.

From now on, she will obey Jesus' admonition in today's gospel to follow “the constricted road that leads to life.”

I like to think of God as a very wise parent or teacher who loves us enough to demand that we do the hard right things even when we see others seemingly benefitting from taking the “road broad that leads to destruction.” Sooner or later many of the liars, cheats and thieves get caught and pay the price. Even if they don't, they can't feel very good about themselves.

It's much better to be the kid whose mom forces him to apologize to the store owner for swiping a candy bar than the kid who gets away with it and learns that stealing pays – at least until the consequence is a lot worse than saying “sorry” to a store manager and being grounded for a couple of nights.

Sadly we see more and more helicopter parents who try to shelter their children from the consequences of their bad choices. They may think they are doing so out of “love” but how can young people develop the backbone to make good choices if they never feel the pain of their mistakes?

So blessings on you parents and teachers who care enough to let young people suffer the consequences

required to send them through the narrow gate and onto the constricted road leading to life. Doing so shows REAL love.

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