

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Apr 29th 2016

Jesus said to his disciples: “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:12-13.

One of the treasures that has come into my life since converting to Catholicism in 2002 has been getting to know our brothers and sisters in Christ that have gone before us, the Saints. Today is no exception. Saint Catherine of Siena has been a wonderful role model for me. Through her life, we have the opportunity to witness what it looks like to love as Jesus loves. Throughout her short life, she lived serving others humbly. She helped the poor and the ill both in hospitals and homes.

I have worked in Creighton’s College of Nursing for 15 years, and have looked to St. Catherine as our Patronage Saint for sick people, sicknesses and nurses. St. Catherine became very near and dear to my heart when I went through my training in an Omaha hospital in the role of Chaplain. It was my desire to love others as Jesus loves us. One evening I was on-call at the hospital and was paged early in the shift. “Mary” had presented in the emergency room and her diagnosis was that she only had a few hours before she would die.

Her family started to call family and friends and the rest of the evening was spent saying good-bye. After arriving to the room and speaking with Mary and her family, I asked the family if it would be meaningful for them to pray. I then learned that they did not want prayers and they were agnostic. Throughout the evening before Mary’s passing, I remained present for Mary and her family and of course respected their wishes of no prayers. I loved Mary and her family as Jesus loved them.

After Mary passed, Mary’s husband called for me. He wanted to visit with me about my faith. We had a meaningful conversation in which he shared the pains he has had experienced throughout his life with God. He thanked me for my service to Mary and her family that evening.

God is love. God doesn’t choose certain people to love. God loves all of us. Unconditionally.

Saint Catherine of Siena was also called to intervene in the social and political tensions of her time. Her advice to the people and clergy was that renewal could come through love for God. She wrote many letters hoping to reach those in authority begging for peace. Her example remains relevant for us today in our time of social and political tension. We need to focus on how Jesus loves and bring that to the world.

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us.

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