

*"I give praise to you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."* In last Thursday's gospel Jesus also spoke to us about the importance of childlike faith. When Jesus speaks of childlike faith he is not speaking of a childish faith, but rather a purity of faith that is unstained by the world. It is the purity of our faith that makes it pleasing to God, not its shallowness. Let me share with you the story of just such a faith.

Twenty years ago, a little Chinese girl came to Medjugorje with her husband and two young children because she was dying of cancer. She had been born and raised Buddhist, but because her husband was Catholic, she became Catholic.

Those who knew her would tell you that the most remarkable and endearing quality of this little Chinese girl was her extraordinary childlike innocence. It was this childlike innocence that brought her to Medjugorje to ask Our Blessed Mother for a healing because her children were so young and she did not want to leave them without a mother. Her story and her innocence so touched Fr Jozo that he asked her to give her testimony here on the steps of the altar at St James and her innocent, faith-filled words truly touched the hearts of many who were present that day.

When it came time to climb Mt Krzvac she was too weak from her long battle with cancer to make the climb so when her husband and her children climbed the mountain to pray for her, she returned to the hill of apparitions to offer her own prayers. It was there at the cross on apparition hill that Jesus asked her for the gift of her suffering and she gladly gave it to him with joy and childlike trust.

She returned home and her cancer soon took a turn for the worse but she continued to offer her sufferings to Jesus for his priests whom she loved. Shortly before she died she called her husband into their bedroom and asked him who he would remarry. She was of course asking him who would be the mother of her children. She was surprised and delighted to hear him say that he would not remarry, but that he would finish raising their children and then he would go to seminary to become a priest.

God answers our prayers in mysterious ways, not always in the ways that we expect but always in the way that is best for us. That little Chinese girl's deep, childlike faith not only brought her husband to the priesthood, it also had a profound affect on other men who were discerning their call to the priesthood, and it gave her children a deep and abiding trust in Jesus. She did not receive the gift that she had asked for when she came to Medjugorje, but she did receive something far greater, the healing of her heart, her mind and her soul and her pure, childlike trust in Jesus touched the hearts and minds and souls of many whom she would never know.

This is the gift that Jesus is asking from you, the gift of your heart, your mind and your soul, given to him in childlike love and trust, that he might make his divine love present in the world through you. You were created for an eternal love affair with God but that love affair can only happen if you make the unconditional gift of yourself to Jesus in love, just like that little Chinese girl. Give Jesus your heart and he will give you eternity. So as you continue your pilgrimage and bring your prayers to Mary, ask her first to teach you how to love her son with an undivided heart, just as she did, just as that little Chinese girl did who entrusted her life and her children into the hands of Jesus and Mary with childlike trust and faith. Nothing you can ever do could be more pleasing to the Father than to make a total gift of yourself to his Son who made a total gift of himself to you on the cross. May Mary the mother of all purity and innocence teach you childlike love for her Son, our Lord and savior. Amen.