



EPISODE 3: Witness

“There is no fear in love.” (1 John 4:18)

What does the word “love” tell us about our work in this life? And what does it truly mean to say “yes” to God’s call? Through stories from Scripture, history and encounters in everyday life, we explore how God invites us to be witnesses to His love through acts of personal courage. At the heart of Christianity is Jesus calling us his friends. That’s why the moral life is not primarily about following rules, or even about guarding the health of one’s soul. Instead, the moral life is an invitation to encounter the God of the universe, Who calls us to a vocation of love.

“Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:18)

As we seek to live our faith with courage, we should realize how much our example is a light shining in the darkness. Personal witness is so much more compelling than mere arguments. Whether our call leads us to witness at great personal cost – as in the examples of people like the Austrian martyr Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, the Brazilian reformer and politician Joaquim Nabuco, or the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas – or whether our life of courage seems almost invisible, our example of steadfast love is a beacon.

Notes:

“Merely to shine is futile, merely to burn is not enough: to burn and to shine is perfect.”

– St. Bernard of Clairvaux

When we love, we are willing to sacrifice for it. The word “sacrifice” literally means “to make sacred,” so our sacrifices, great and small, sanctify our lives and bring us closer to our final end: happiness with God. What ultimately matters most is not how many people see us living our daily lives with courage, or that we perform some great action on the world stage. What matters most, says Mother Teresa of Calcutta, is that we do “ordinary things with extraordinary love.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are some of the obstacles that seem to block your way to living fully with courage? Who are some “witnesses” in your own life – people who show the way by what they do, not what they say?

SUGGESTED READINGS

- *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, by Bartolome Las Casas
- *Franz Jägerstätter: Letters and Writings from Prison*
- *A Hidden Life: The Life of Bl. Franz Jaegerstatter*
- “Sonnet 116,” by William Shakespeare
- *The Epistle of St. John*