

Footprints

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in
the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my
life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about
it.

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most
troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the
most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and
will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

—*Author Unknown*

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time



“Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to
something
unknown, something new.”

These words from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,
French philosopher and Jesuit priest, are
relevant for many of us on our recovery journey
(remember, recovery is for us whether or not our
loved one finds help). With new hope and a
vision for a brighter tomorrow, we may find
some disparity between where we want to be and
where we actually are. Modern conveniences
have conditioned us to expect things to come
quickly and when we call for them. God’s
kingdom works a bit differently, yet we can be
sure that He has great plans for us if we remain
patient with ourselves and the work *He* is doing.

Jesus knows our natural human tendencies and speaks to our condition of impatience in this week's Gospel reading:

*“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,
Or what parable can we use for it?
It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the
ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.
But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the
largest of plants
and puts forth large branches,
so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”*

It is wise of us to recall moments along our path where the seed of faith has been sown and watered. Even when things have not gone the way we planned, God continues to call us back to Him in order to consider a better way. In recovery, it may feel like we are regressing as we engage in self-discovery and start cleaning up our own side of the street.

With awareness comes opportunity. However, the initial stages of re-framing our lives through the twelve steps can be challenging. As the seed of faith germinates, some inevitable growing pains will arise. This can distract us from the wondrous things God is doing within us! Teilhard de Chardin continues to note:

“And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability— and that it may take a very long time.”

Where have you noticed yourself progressing since beginning your recovery journey? Have others mentioned that they have seen a change take place in you? Often, others can see the not-so-subtle changes in us before we can even notice them ourselves. In other moments, we may have to be mindful of the expectations we set on ourselves and others, knowing that God has a plan for each of us.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wraps up this topic, continuing to offer words of liberation and hope:

“Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.”