

Gianna Gobbi: A Joyful Servant

Call to Prayer

We gather as a community of catechists, to thank God for and to lift up the work of Gianna Gobbi, joyful servant, faithful catechist and observant Montessorian. She reminds us: *As catechists, who seek to “pray without ceasing”, may our ears be attuned to the voice of the Good Shepherd and the voice of the child, together speaking our names in love and calling us to fullness of life.* Let us now do what we do in the Atrium, light a candle, and open our ears and hearts to the Word of God.



The Word of God

A Reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11-24)

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do. We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good [both] for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 84: 3-5, 11

R. (cf. 5) Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you.

My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the LORD.

My heart and flesh cry out for the living God.

R. Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you.

As the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest to settle her young,

My home is by your altars, LORD of hosts, my king and my God!

R. Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you.

Better one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

Better the threshold of the house of my God than a home in the tents of the wicked.

R. Blessed are those who dwell in your house! They never cease to praise you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew. (Matthew 13:45,46)

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearl.

When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

1. In the Atrium for the youngest child, the material for this parable includes a wooden diorama of the merchant's house. The house includes a small wooden table. The table conveys that this simple wooden structure is a home. Gianna knew the development of the child's religious life begins in the family environment from the very beginning of the child's life.
 - Gianna reminds us that the environment is essential to the construction of the human person. How have you observed this parable material assisting the child in his or her contemplation and meditation? Have you observed the merchant's environment bringing delight to the child?
 - Have you reflected upon: What about the environment attracts the child? How does this environment allow the child's religious life to flourish?
 - How has the Atrium environment transformed families in your community?
2. The materials and meditation for the older child assist the child of the second plane in understanding his or her role in hastening the Kingdom. This child understands that he or she is called to respond to the gift. This child, with new capacities, sees that the family and school environment are not enough. The second plane child desires to experience a greater society.
 - The Direct Aim of the child in the second plane of development is to put them in touch with the materials so they are discovering who they are in this world. How has this parable allowed the child to discover his or herself?
 - How does this parable allow the child to "Help me think it by myself"?
 - For this plane, Montessori always emphasizes wider contacts, an expansive education, a vastness of culture, the open environment. Have you considered how this parable allows the child to become adapted to a reality as large as the world, the universe, the whole of humanity, all of culture?
3. We ponder with the oldest child: Can we do something for people to know about the Kingdom? For instance, the atrium can be a precious pearl that can help you find great value and beauty. God created His Kingdom so we can enjoy and value everything that there is in it, but we need to value ourselves, and be aware of all that there is inside of us.

- The oldest child knows that we were created to take care of our environment. How have you seen this realized in the child's meditation, questions, artwork or prayerful response?
- How have you seen this child understand his or her role in the larger community?
- Ponder the following statement: *The gift of this treasure invites a totally committed response which at times may be difficult but is also joyful.*
Does it remind you of a story from the Atrium or an experience with a child? Or an incident in your own life?

Closing Prayer

In *The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori writes, ““We know how to find pearls in the shells of oysters, gold in the mountains and coal in the bowels of the earth, but we are unaware of the spiritual (force) that the child hides in himself when he enters this world to renew mankind.”

Lord, we thank you for the work of Gianna Gobbi in helping us to understand the child. As we grow in our understanding of the child, may we come to encounter You more deeply in Your Word. In the same manner as the merchant found the precious pearl, may all catechists seek and find in the work of Gianna Gobbi, a guide to see the preciousness, the sacred, the joy in the mystery of the child. We ask this in your most holy name. Amen.