

# Doing it His Way

By Stephen Gabriel

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One of the toughest lessons in life is that God's ways are not our ways. Indeed, it is a reality that some of us never fully accept. Because of our pride, we find it very difficult to accept the fact that things happen in life that we can't understand. All we have to do is open the newspaper and read about the earthquake that killed thousands, the child born with terrible birth defects or a teenager contracting a debilitating disease, and we wonder, "How can God let this happen? How can good come from these things?"

Sometimes it is very hard to see the good that is derived from such suffering. We have to remember that God sees the big picture, start to finish. If we try to look at life through the eyes of faith – with a supernatural outlook – we will be better able to catch a glimpse of the panorama of Our Lord's perspective.

God sees souls. He sees grace at work. We may see a deformed child and devastated parents. God sees that child in heaven close to Him and He sees those parents resembling His Son more and more through their cross and through the heroic love they give their child.

God makes it clear in today's first reading (Is 55:6-9) that His ways are, in fact, better. "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."

We creatures can never hope to fully fathom the motives of God. Our finite intellect simply cannot begin to approach the infinite love, wisdom and justice of our God.

In today's Gospel (Mt 20:1-16), Jesus gives us a glimpse of God's ways. Jesus tells the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. Some are called to work early in the day, while others begin work later. At the end of the day, they all get paid the same wage. Those who started earlier complain to the landowner that they were treated unfairly.

The entire scenario seems to fly in the face of our sense of justice. Some of us may even have to secretly suppress a similar feeling when we learn of a deathbed conversion, as wonderful as that really is. Yet, Our Lord sees things much differently. Our Lord looks at hearts! He considers the capacity of one's heart to love, which is not governed by the laws of physics or the passage of time.

God's ways frequently conflict with our own. We want one thing, and He wants another. When we insist on our own way in spite of what God reveals, we make life more difficult at best, and our insistence may even lead to sin.

The sin of contraception is a case in point. A married couple may have a serious reason to avoid conception at a certain time in their life. Yet, rather than preserve both the unitive and procreative aspects of their sexual union and place their trust in God, they "make

sure” that conception does not occur by driving an artificial wedge between these two essential aspects of one of God’s greatest gifts to mankind.

We can make progress in accepting God’s way, even when we don’t understand it, by trying to become more childlike in our spiritual life.

Consider the relationship between a parent and a small child. The child will cry uncontrollably when he doesn’t get what he wants. Yet, after he gets over the initial upset, he wraps his arms around his mother or father in confidence. He doesn’t understand, but he knows his mother and father love him and he relies on them for everything.

This is the kind of relationship God wants us to have with Him. He wants us to become like little children, relying on Him for everything.

Let us ask Our Lord in prayer to make us more childlike and more accepting of His ways. We can cry and complain to Him like the small child when our life takes an unwelcome turn. But, then let’s wrap our arms around Him and ask Him for the strength to embrace His will as our own.

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