

Reflection on Stewardship...Appreciating Our Family.

Rick Thompson

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When I met Corinne for the first time a few months back, we spent some time doing the requisite getting to know each other stuff, superficial at first, not really getting into any one topic too deeply. We spoke of our backgrounds, families, what our interests were. The conversation soon delved into St John of the Cross and what we were looking for in a new priest. It was obvious to me that this was not to be a typical interview. I was pretty unclear as to who was interviewing who. Which is how it probably should be, I suppose. Anyway, she asked me what it was about St. John of the Cross that made my family decide to belong. I am not sure I had ever been asked that before. What is it specifically that made us want to continue coming back? I don't think I gave a really good answer. I am pretty sure I stumbled about and finally muttered something along the lines of, "I don't know, there is something about it that feels right".

Recently I traveled to Washington, DC for work. I have been to DC several times, but this is the first time I had ever arrived on a Saturday. What makes this point important is that because I arrived on a Saturday, I was able to attend church somewhere on Sunday. Well, since I was in DC, I decided I would attend church at a granddaddy of a church, The National Cathedral. The Cathedral is rich with history. President Woodrow Wilson is buried there, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his last Sunday sermon there in 1968, there have been daily services held there since 1912. I point this all out to state the obvious; this church is a big deal. Well, I figured out how to navigate the subway system to get me to the closest station to the church. And then I set off walking. And after walking what seemed like 20 miles, all up hill, I saw it, towering above the tree line majestically. As I approached I was in awe of its size. I knew it was big, but I had no idea how big. Our little church would probably fit inside several times and there still would have plenty of room left over.

So, after spending some time looking around and taking some pictures, the organ started and I took a seat. The procession began with the choir entering first followed by, if my count was correct, 8 priests. The service was a typical Rite II service and I enjoyed it very much. During the service, I felt close to God, I dare anyone not to feel close to God in a place like that. But, you know what? I didn't feel close to anything or anyone else

there. As I was sitting there after taking communion, Corinne's question entered my thoughts. "What is it about St John of the Cross that made you want to come back?" Something just felt right then, and it continues to feel right now. I didn't feel it in that wonderful cathedral, as grand and beautiful and holy as it is, I didn't feel that unexplainable thing. That thing that I still struggle to put into coherent words. This isn't to put down the parishioners of the Cathedral, they were all pleasant to me, but my point is to raise up the parishioners of St John of the Cross.

As we embark on our stewardship campaign, I would like to ask you to think about the question that Corinne asked me. What is it about St John of the Cross that makes you want to come back? We all have our reasons. But I have talked to others who believe as I do, that something just feels right here. While attending church in DC, I missed my family. Of course I mean Amy, Lukas, and Sophie, but I also mean my family here. We are a family and like all families we face some struggles. This past year especially, we have faced our share of struggles. But, I am excited about our future, more excited than I have been in many years. But to get to where we need to go, we need everybody in the family to pitch in. To be sure, money is important. We need it to do the unglamorous but important stuff like pay our wonderful priest, keep the lights on, buy Eucharistic supplies, and provide community outreach to name just a few. So, if you are able to give monetary gifts, we welcome them. Just as important are the gifts of time and talents. We rely quite heavily on volunteer assistance to make our parish run smoothly. This parish has been blessed with people willing to go above and beyond in order to get things done. There are many opportunities out there for you to get involved in. One thing Corinne shared with me shortly after our first meeting is that she was surprised at the number of things being done here by volunteers.

One last thing about the cathedral, during their announcements, the priest mentioned that they would be having their stewardship fair sometime in the coming weeks and he encouraged people to think about their time, talents, and treasure and how they can best serve their church. There was something comforting in knowing that even a church as large as that one has the same issues as we do.

If you are like me, and something just feels right here, please take that into consideration as you determine the level and form of stewardship that is right for you.