

There is a quote from *The Lord of the Rings* wisely spoken by Gandalf the Grey that goes like this: “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.” The decisions with how we use our time have changed over the years: some for the good, others for the worse. The hope though is that the developing relationship with God will reveal not only who you are but the world too, consequently transforming how that time is spent.

One way in which God reveals himself, and transforms us is through acts of service. Service has the capacity to open our eyes to the needs of God’s kingdom and in these needs we can find where God needs us. Jesus to say the least changed the lives of his apostles as they witnessed and participated in his ministry. They were transformed by the charity of Jesus, the redeeming ministry they partook in, and the impact upon the people they helped. Such encounters made them willing to spread the Gospel and risk their lives. They knew something that could not have made them merely return to their former ways and life.

Jesus comes to every person to invite him or her to serve others. He says your name; He wants you to come with Him. To spend that time with Him can be everything; that may be all the Lord asks. From these encounters Jesus gradually can touch the heart and work wonders within someone. Service can become more than a mere duty or something you shied away from into a joy that is founded on self-giving. It is transformative enough that it makes you want to venture out with others and bring the Good News to them. Even if you were told to travel the world, with only God’s grace and a backpack to your name, this joy in serving God’s kingdom gives you everything you need.

In any act of service, we can build relationships through which God can work. The present and future depends upon the relationships we do or don’t build. While our service may not change the world, it does have the power to affect a person. And in this way it is more significant than striving to change the world’s situation at once because a person’s encounter with Jesus can ultimately renew someone and give him or her spiritual strength that can go through anything. These encounters with people are how the world will change.

So the service does not have to be bold necessarily. St. Joseph reminded us this week that service can be humble, quiet and effective. Each of us can serve with the gifts God has given us. That’s really all you need. We just have to take the time with Jesus to figure out how these gifts can best serve others. Each of us can do something no other person can. And we live too with graces we don’t know we have.

St. Vincent de Paul said “always the hand of God is outstretched to those who wish to clasp it.” Jesus calls us to come with Him and be that person who reaches out in sincere love which is reflective of the Father. The decisions we make are manifestations of what lies within us. It is God’s grace which comes from time spent with Him that guides us to make these decisions to serve and love with selfless joy.

