Compassion 3

In our review about compassion following guidance from Dr. McDonigal from the radio program “The Peoples’ Pharmacy”, program 1104, hosted by Joe and Terry Gradon, there comes a meditation we can use to bring the virtue of compassion out of us.

All of us have been triggered by a slight or a hurt caused by another. Where is compassion when we meet them or even think about them? Dr. McDonigal gives us a mantra – a phrase we can use to block the trigger in us. It is the phrase, “Just like me.” When we meet or think about the person who can cause a trigger in us, think just like me that person is human too. And you want that person to be free from suffering too. Don’t add injury onto insult. “Just like me” diffuses suffering and unlocks empathy even as it triggers stress.

“You’re a jerk and have caused me hurt but you are just like me. I don’t want to suffer and I don’t want you to suffer.”

If your goal is to change hearts and minds, you can try but don’t let it come from your own suffering or feeling triggered.

Let’s go deeper. During the Christmas season, you will possibly meet the individuals who have hurt you. Without realizing, “Just like me”, you can try to hide the resentment or anger, but it will leave a lasting scar. If you feel rage and dehumanize the other, it can leave you in a toxic stage of anger. The trigger by the other will poison you, dehumanize the other, makes you stew in your own anxiety feeling victimized by the other. You re-run the hurt, ruminate, and make the situation worse. This leads to greater suffering in the world by wishing evil on those who cause harm. Compassion is to reduce suffering. Acknowledge the pain but compassion wishes that that person who harmed you would not have caused that harm. Compassion rises up a hope that that person would experience a positive change.

Compassion can change people’s lives, especially your own. Its aim is to reduce suffering, no less your own. Compassion leads to your well-being, courage, and action. Compassion for others leads to compassion that spills out unto you. Compassion during the season of Christmas brings Jesus into the world.

Let me quote from a letter you received after what you did this past Thanksgiving with the food and the turkeys you provided for the hurting in our community.

I paraphrase:

Dear Parishioners,

Thank you so much for making Thanksgiving dinner possible for our family. It was so wonderful and my family and I are so very grateful. (Signed) With lots of love from me and my husband and our four children.

Compassion is wonderful for you and for me and for them.