

In the Gospel Jesus invites us to greatness....to holiness. He calls us beyond the minimum. The commandments include:” Don’t murder. Don’t commit adultery. Don’t take a false oath.” This is a fine starting point. At the same time Jesus wants us to mature in our spirituality. He speaks about “growing angry, looking lustfully at another, meaning what we say if it is Yes or No.”

Let’s reflect briefly on “growing angry.” Life is difficult. We daily confront various amounts of stress. Relationships are demanding with never-ending pressure. We don’t always get the quality of sleep we desire. Our aches and pains are too numerous to count. Bills are unrelenting. We may find ourselves yelling or being yelled at. Civility may be rare during the day. We learn of gossip about us that is blatantly false.

It doesn’t take much for us to “grow angry” even to “be angry.” Deep down we think “We get no respect.” What was originally a seed of anger can quickly become a vast mountain of rage. This is the “growing angry” of which Jesus speaks in the Gospel. We haven’t physically murdered anyone. However, we have fed an irritant; nurtured it; watered it; given it sunshine and it is much larger than at the beginning. Jesus wants us to catch the growing seeds of resentment and release them, get rid of them, send them to the North to “chill out.”

As disciples of Jesus, see if we can notice the first stirrings of anger. When we do, take a deep breath, hold briefly and then release. Breathe in peace. Breathe out anger, resentment, hostility, rage, thoughts of revenge. All are poisonous for our heart, soul and spirit. Then SMILE! We have made a choice for the Jesus way. We have experienced a little victory.

My sisters and brothers: Let’s accept the challenge of Jesus to greatness....to holiness.