

Father Dave's Weekly Homily

10/02/11 27 A

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.

-- The great Jewish writer Elie Wiesel often tells a story from one of the WWII Nazi death camps: A prisoner had escaped, and in retaliation, the Nazis hung a young boy, forcing all the prisoners to watch his death.

-- As the dead boy dangled there one prisoner shouted *Where is God now?* Another prisoner answered *There, on that rope. That's God!*

-- At the very heart of our faith, we profess that God became human in Jesus Christ. God sent his son into the world, after he had sent many prophets who were rejected. Despite that, he still sent his son—and he was killed.

-- But that was not the end of the story. Jesus was raised, and with him, all who had been the lowly and rejected. All who were like that young boy in the Nazi camp, deemed expendable for the “greater good.”

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-- From age to age and century to century, Jesus has stood with the rejected, with those thought to be useless or a burden to society. Jesus is not Superman, coming to rescue them at the last moment. He suffers with them, like he did with prisoners in the Nazi camps.

-- Today, as we celebrate Respect Life Sunday, we remind ourselves that Jesus stands with the outcasts of today's society. Jesus stands with the unborn child who is diagnosed in the womb with severe handicaps. He stands along side the elderly man with Alzheimer's disease. He stands with the chronically unemployed, especially in our present troubled economy.

-- And, yes, he even stands with the prisoner awaiting execution. He was with Troy Davis in Georgia last week as he stretched out his hands on the gurney for the lethal injection. Davis had claimed his innocence, and

even some of the jury members who convicted him had second thoughts about their verdict on seeing new evidence.

-- Jesus stands with all who are counted as expendable. He doesn't distinguish between the innocent and the not-so-innocent, for all of us are subject to sin.

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-- We are called to stand with the rejected and expendable people of the world, with the powerless of society. Yes, we are told that only those who are productive deserve protection, perhaps with a few exceptions for those who are poor through no fault of their own.

-- Our society tells us that we are owners of the land, that we can seize the profits because they belong to us alone. But Ezekiel and Jesus both remind us that we are tenants on the land. We are not in charge—God is.

-- Of course, God does not micro-manage our days. God does not strike us down every time we do something wrong, and God does not always give us an immediate, earthly reward for every good act.

-- But God does ask us to bear the good fruit of love, joy, peace, and patience. God suffers with those who suffer, and calls us to respect the dignity of all, especially those who are rejected or thought of as worthless.

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-- Jesus came to save us, even in our sinfulness. He stood up for the lowly and rejected of his day, even when the powerful people resisted his call.

-- Will we follow his example in our own day?