

Living in this area surrounded as we are by the military and veterans, we accept as normal a level of physical courage that most people in the US would consider extraordinary. We consider the sacrifices demanded by the military on the service members and their families as normal. The risks of airborne operations, military aviation, working around heavy equipment, weapons and explosives isn't considered worthy of comment. We live surrounded by heroes.

That is physical courage. What about moral courage? What is more difficult, jumping out of an allegedly perfectly good airplane while in flight, or telling the boss bad news? How about setting and standing in close proximity to a breaching charge as it goes off vice admitting that you have done something wrong? Moral courage is much more challenging than physical courage.

As Jesus was calling his disciples at the beginning of his public ministry, do you think that they were all courageous men? The fishermen accepted some physical risk in their profession, but the tax collector, not so much because Roman Soldiers enforced his decisions and protected his person.

What about moral courage? We really don't know or do we? We know that Matthew, the tax collector had to be morally courageous because he abandoned his life of wealth and privilege for a life of poverty and uncertainty. Why did the protected criminal, because that was what the tax collectors were, suddenly become a bastion of moral courage? It was because of the influence of Jesus Christ in his life.

All of the Apostles abandoned their livelihoods, friends and their families to follow Jesus. Their call, our call to follow Christ doesn't allow for equivocation, we are called to commit, and to live up to our commitments. That leads us to what is probably the biggest difference between physical and moral courage. In most cases, an act of physical courage is one and done. Moral courage usually requires a commitment, sometimes lifelong or longer commitment.

Both physical and moral courage have consequences. Injury, financial and social consequences, and in those great acts of love where they both combine, maybe even death.

Physical courage is usually applauded by society, and rightly so. Moral courage is usually looked upon with skepticism, if not outright hostility by society because it represents a radical departure from the accepted norm. Moral courage is more likely to be appreciated by future generations than the current generation; that is if the morally courageous action is appreciated at all.

The call to discipleship by Jesus is unique. In the ancient world, a disciple would learn from a master and when their training was complete, they would depart ending their formal relationship. Jesus called the Apostles and taught them just as the normal masters, teachers of his day, but he took the master / student relationship to a new level because his intent was to work with and thru his disciples for the salvation of the world.

We are all called to be Disciples of Christ, and just as with the Apostles, Our Lord wants to work within us and through us for the salvation of the world. As Catholics, as followers of Christ we are called to be courageous, to stand up for and speak up and defend the teachings of Our Lord and his Church.

Here in Fayetteville and Hope Mills over a dozen men and women have been arrested for human trafficking, that is slave trading, since July. Last year, in the US, Planned Parenthood murdered over 321,000 children; many right here near the corner of Riley and Skibo Roads. Currently we are fighting to keep our local schools from teaching same sex pleasure techniques, complete with diagrams as a method of birth control to our children in the starting sixth grade and that a person's sex is determined by feelings starting in Pre Kindergarten.

These are all outrageous acts that cry out to God for relief, for them to cease, but the continue. Edmund Burke who was an Irish Statesman in the mid 1700s is credited with saying, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing." I would like to think that we are all good men and women, so where is our voice, our actions to stop these outrageous acts?

We are in an epic battle between good and evil. A battle to ensure that the Judo-Christian values that we cherish as a people continue to be the basis for our culture. Based on how loud the evil is squalling,

we are in danger of losing this round of the battle. We are also in danger of losing.

As faithful disciples we depend on Jesus Christ for the grace that fuels and sustains our moral courage, our acts of love that uphold the dignity of every person ever conceived as unique and beautiful children of God. Jesus depends on us to act in accordance with his teaching and to respond to the grace he has so generously provided to us.

You are all good people! Take action! Pray, particularly pray the Rosary, and then pray some more. Sign the petition to the school board against the Comprehensive Sex Education Program labeled 'Get Real' and the sex determined by feeling indoctrination disguised as anti bullying labeled 'Welcoming Schools' both written and distributed by Planned Parenthood and their subsidiaries. Write our Congressmen and Senators and tell them to stop funding Planned Parenthood. Learn to recognize the signs of human trafficking. Address acts that violate human dignity whenever and wherever you encounter them.

Living our faith isn't just showing up for mass on Sunday and the occasional social event at church. It requires us to challenge ourselves and to challenge those we encounter every day to live our faith in our thoughts, words and actions. We must live our lives relying on Christ, always remembering that he is also relying on us.