

**A Childlike Quality**    Seventh Week in Ordinary Time    Saturday, May 26, 2018    8:15 AM  
Jas 5:13-20;    **Mk 10:13-16**    St. Philip Neri, priest    (Children when they are really confronted with true, authentic, genuine love, accept it. Adults do not necessarily.)

**“Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.”**

Now this may sound to you like a very simple little story, but it’s actually rather deep.

**What is it about children that Jesus is recommending?** We know what children can be like. They can be argumentative, boisterous, belligerent, willful, cunning, deceitful, small, petty, and so on. So children are not a universal symbol of virtue, and surely Jesus is not recommending that adults behave like children, not at all. And yet there is something about a child that Jesus sees as an essential component to the spiritual life, to being able to enter into the kingdom, which is the presence of God, which is actually cooperation with God in the building of something new. And I believe **it is the willingness of children to accept love and to believe that they are being loved when they are being loved.**

Now as adults we know there are people who do not want to be loved or touched for various reasons, which we cannot analyze or understand. Some people isolate themselves, push others away; and some people push God away, for various reasons. But **children when they are really confronted with true, authentic, genuine love, accept it. Adults do not necessarily,** even authentic, genuine love, sometimes they don’t really want it, for many reasons, which we cannot go into.

So this is a quality that we need to, you might say, keep hold of. As we grow and mature we should grow and mature, and **we should leave behind, as St. Paul says, the things of childhood.** We should leave behind our toys, and we should leave behind all the smallnesses, all the pettinesses—I know those aren’t real words, but I’m just creating them—that children have created; we need to leave that behind. But we need to keep something too, because **at every stage of life we are capable of holiness**—at every stage of life we are capable of holiness—and these children were capable of holiness, and that’s what Jesus saw in them. **And that’s something we need not to grow out of, but rather encourage in ourselves.**