

Lenten Reflection

Wednesday, Fifth Week of Lent April 5, 2017



By Associate Erin Middleton

Today's Old Testament reading from Daniel is one of the childhood stories I relished hearing in church. The tyrant Nebuchadnezzar and his fiery furnace was no match for the courageous servants named Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. I loved hearing this fantastical story back then, but I must admit I believed it was sort of a fairy tale made up to entertain us. As an adult, I now believe this story is filled with truth. I am aware that there are people just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walking the Earth today.

The other day in the Pittsburgh Catholic, I read a story about a modern day Shadrach named Sami Awad residing in Bethlehem.¹ Sami is a Palestinian Christian who leads the Holy Land Trust, a job he inherited from his uncle who was a pioneer in the Palestinian non-violent resistance to the Israeli Occupation. Sami and his uncle attended college in the United States, but both were born and raised, and then returned to Palestine committed to the Palestinian struggle. Their method to change the culture around them promotes dialogue and non-violent resistance. Like Shadrach, Sami refuses to worship the golden gods around him when the music plays...instead of responding in violence, he believes God requires of him peaceful dialogue and actions. In a land of tension, he is a man of peace, a man who looks to Jesus. He says, "I look at Him as the ultimate peacemaker...he never presented a political solution...he presented a kingdom vision of how people can live together and get along and respect each other."

Sami has definitely felt "the heat being turned up" in this fiery furnace we call Palestine today. He has been called names, beaten up, arrested, and abandoned by employees and friends, and still he trusts in God, not the golden gods of violence, power and politics around him. I am humbled and grateful by true stories of people like Sami who are living today, and grateful that God has provided these leaders of truth and justice in the church today.

Modern day Shadrachs walk among us, and they might even be closer than we can imagine. Perhaps a man or woman like this resides at our own La Roche College and we are privileged to be a part of shaping the future of the world by the gift of this Providence person. This Lent, do not forget to pray for those who believe in truth and are standing for justice wherever they live, despite the obstacles. Thank God for the modern day Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who walk in our midst.

¹Sudilovsky, J. (2017, March 29) Journey as peacemaker leads Palestinian to dialogue with Israeli settlers. Retrieved from: <http://www.pittsburghcatholic.org/News/Journey-as-peacemaker-leads-Palestinian-to-dialogue-with-Israeli-settlers--30460953>

