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In the reading today, both Paul and Jesus come out swinging.

Paul: “ You, ...are without excuse.” Pow.

Jesus: “Woe to you Pharisees!” Pow!

No time to even duck.

It’s all about judgements. Who thinks they can make them and what are the consequences? Both audiences are seen as hypocrites who judge others and, in the doing, judge themselves.

What are they missing? Paul says, are you “unaware that the *kindness of God* would lead you to repentance.”

Jesus confronts them, “you...pay no attention to judgement and to *love for God*.”

Today people are slinging judgments everywhere. They come out as anger, lies, intolerance, selfishness and control. Its *fear* of losing what I see as mine, even if it means destruction of our planet home or limiting access to voting rights.

The *inner* sanctum of spirit and heart and common good go unrecognized.

The call then, is toward *larger inner spaces* of honesty, justice, kindness, tolerance, simplicity and community.

I would like to suggest two women who, within the last 150 years, offer an *antidote* to this harsh reality while seeming to have little in common: St. Therese of Lisieux 1873-1897, a 24-year-old cloistered Carmelite and Venerable Madeleine Delbrel 1904-1964, a 60-year-old woman of the world.

However, looking at the kind of spirituality these two French women espouse, reveals some surprising and helpful commonalities.

We are familiar with the spirituality that Therese called, “the Little Way”.

It consisted of performing her everyday duties and enduring each petty ordeal of suffering in the *presence* of and *love* of God. In this spirit, *everyday life* was transformed into an *arena of holiness*. GUTD P. 18

It is said that Madeleine, initially an atheist, had a “bedazzling” conversion. She eventually decided that her vocation was in the world, among the “ordinary people.” She said, “We, the ordinary people of the streets, believe that *this* street, *this* world, where *God has placed us* is our place of *holiness*.” She conceived of a new type of missionary- not traveling overseas but crossing the *borders of faith* to bear witness to the Gospel in *friendship and solidarity*.... In her years of local action, she was asked to oversee the social services for her city and served as a lay advisor for the movement of “worker priests.”

She called her spiritual discipline the “Prayer of the agenda”- a heightened awareness of the *presence* of God in all the *ordinary* activities of life, whether meeting people or answering the phone. In this awareness, a person could experience the deepest spiritual dimension of life. GUTD p.138

We have so many choices of how to *live* the next sacred moment.

We can make complaints about our limitations as excuses for inaction.

We can get upset about something over which we have no control.

We can pretend that we have no power.

What would those two women say?

Once a retreat leader suggested a three-breath method of preparing for prayer or any other action. (Do it now as if you just came to your place for this service.)

1st Breath: To Arrive.

2nd breath: To Be here.

3rd breath: What’s next?

Recently during a retreat, I was quietly gazing out at the beauty around me. Wondering if I should go back in to the “holy place” to continue praying, I did the 3 breaths and after “What next?” I waited. What I heard within was, “Stay here. I am with you *wherever* you are.”

I ask you to set an *intention* now, to be more present to The Presence at some specific times today. Stop, breathe, ask, wait and listen.

You will be gently led.

Thus, we can and *are* bringing healing to our unquiet world.