

Arthur Jones a correspondent with the National Catholic reporter shared an important moment from his early life with his readers, He had just been drafted into the Royal Air Force and found himself in a military barracks with thirty other guys. On the first night he had to make a big decision. He had always knelt by the side of his bed to say his night prayers. Should he continue that practice now that he was in the military? And then a thought came to him, “Why should I change just because people are watching? Am I going to begin my life away from home by letting other people dictate what I should and should not do?” He knelt by his bed and said his prayers, fully aware that 29 sets of eyes were watching him. As it turned out, he was the only catholic in the barracks. The ten minutes he spent on his knees every night sparked discussions amongst those thirty soldiers that lasted for hours.

On the last day of boot camp, one of his barracks mates said to him, “You’re the finest Christian I ever met.” Arthur replied, “Well. I might be the most public Christian you ever met, but I

don't think I am the finest. Still thanks for the compliment.”

This story illustrates one of the points that Jesus makes in our gospel today. Commitment to Jesus Christ means taking a stand on certain things. Now while it worked out nicely for Arthur Jones and his barracks mates, that isn't always going to be the case. Sometimes, our faith will set us in direct opposition to others.

When Roger LaPorte, a former Jesuit seminarian, set himself on fire in front of the United Nations building in 1965 to protest the Viet Nam war, Cardinal Spellman spoke critically of the young man's actions. Peace Activist Daniel Berrigan was warned by his superiors to remain silent about the incident. Yet, at a mass for LaPorte, Daniel questioned whether the harsh judgment by the cardinal was truly reflective of the compassion of Christ. He suggested that any judgments of LaPorte should be left to God. For his stand on the issue and for the many other times that he dared to speak truth to the powers that be, Daniel Berrigan was treated first with silence, then ostracism, and then scorn. His

discipleship set him at odds with his Jesuit family but also with many of his brothers and sisters in the Catholic faith. But this affirms what Jesus is saying in Luke's gospel, the very presence of Jesus in the life of a disciple precipitates a crisis; a division among people. The severity of the crisis depends on the intensity of the people's response. This is the message of our gospel today. Our commitment to Christ must take priority over everything else.

"You are a light of the world," Jesus said, "A city set on a hill can not be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. So your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."