

November 12, 2017
“Uniquely Qualified –
MCC NoVa’s Got Talent”

First Reading ~ from 1 Samuel 17: 32-35, 37-44, 48-49

David said to Saul, “Let no one be discouraged because of Goliath; I will go and fight this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “You can’t fight this Philistine. You’re just a boy, but he has been a warrior since he was your age.”

But David said to Saul, “I am a shepherd for my father’s sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth; and if it attacked me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. God, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.”

So Saul said to David, “Go, and may God be with you!” Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. David strapped Saul’s sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them.

Then David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them.” So David removed them. Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd’s bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. The Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with a stick?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your body to the birds.”

When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

Second Reading ~ adapted from *Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia For All That Is*, By Sister Joan Chittister and Rowan Williams (Former Archbishop of Canterbury)

Crisis and challenge test the deepest parts of our self. They measure what there is inside of us that is truly full of life. They ferret out the parts of us that simply refuse to die or give up. It is a truly wholesome moment, this choice for life in the face of death, or for an attempt at success in the face of failure.

Such things are not about clarifying or enduring the moment. These things are about action. They require resolution. They are about negotiating the turning points in our journey.

The alleluia moment comes when we finally realize that life is not about one thing, it is about many things. It is about parts of ourselves that we have not recognized yet, yes, but it is also about parts of the self that are meant to go (self-doubt, fear of failure, fear of being hurt, despair, woundedness, etc.), parts that must go if we are ever to live life in ways we never thought possible.

As a result, we come to understand that there is no one single way that a life must be shaped in order for one to be happy. In fact, happiness comes when you are finally doing what you were meant to be doing in the first place. Challenge and crises, as Alan K. Chalmers puts it, "Refine life. In them you discover what you are."

David faces Goliath and becomes the Goliath within him. We must all sing alleluia, and give praise and thanks for the opportunity to do the same.