

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time: June 21, 2020

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

Reflection on the Gospel Mt 10: 26-33

You are worth more than many sparrows.

My German grandmother called them sputzies (rhymes with Utz); my bird-watching husband calls them LGBs (little gray birds). They are sparrows and they have taken up residence in all five of the bird houses in our back yard. They seem to never rest, persistently gathering treasures—lengths of straw, scraps of cloth—to bring home; vigilantly standing watch from the telephone wire; boldly warning me when I come too close on my morning survey of the garden.

There is, it appears, a super-abundance of sparrows, almost too many to keep track of. And yet we hear in today's Gospel that not one of them falls to the ground without God's notice. There are no anonymous sparrows.

I think of sparrows when I see TV images of children's bodies being pulled from the wreckage of their bombed home in Yemen; I think of sparrows when I hear the nightly news document the number of national and global deaths from COVID-19.

Not only is each of these individuals mourned by parents and brothers and sisters and friends; each is treasured by a loving and merciful God, Mother and Father of us all, who marks their fall. There are no anonymous children of God. This belief is acknowledged every Monday on WYPR when the names of those who have been killed in the city in the previous week are solemnly read. It is acknowledged when protestors recite antiphonally "say their names" and the litany of those who have died from police brutality. It was acknowledged by *The Daily*—a podcast I regularly listen to on my walk—in a segment called "One Hundred Thousand Lives" [link below] that provided a few personal details about 100 of COVID-19's victims.

This contemplation of sparrows has prompted me to think about what I can do to affirm the people—obscured in mask-exaggerated anonymity—whom I encounter beyond my home. So I try to make eye contact, to say something other than a perfunctory hello, to recognize in some limited way that there is a person behind the mask, to assure them that they are worth more than many sparrows.

Janice Bonner

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/podcasts/the-daily/obituaries-coronavirus-100000.html>