



Grain

"Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted."

–William Bruce Cameron

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, White Bear Lake, MN

Field

³³Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:33-37

Thoughts.

In the first century, children were loved but didn't have the same rights as they do in most countries today. Jesus' welcoming a child, someone with no status, was about engaging with people for more than the motivation to build notoriety or worldly success. There was something beautiful in just welcoming based in love.

In American history, political leaders greeting children has been part of garnering popular support. Kissing babies from a crowd probably started in the 1800s with President Andrew Jackson, who tragically did not welcome Native American babies. But we have had actual public and behind-the-scenes advocates for children. We can thank some of the early advocates for labor laws and laws that protect children from domestic abuse and other harm.

How much do we value children today? Are we thinking of children when voting or advocating for laws related to the environment, unaccompanied minors at the border, and trafficked youth? Are we thinking of children when deciding whether to be vaccinated when so many children are too young to receive a COVID vaccine themselves?

LOPPW has worked with the Women of the ELCA and in coalition and with diverse groups to address the insidious problem of sex trafficking. We have found a lot, though not complete, bipartisan support on a number of anti-sex trafficking bills. More recently, QAnon has tried to hijack anti-sex trafficking advocacy efforts to fit into their conspiracy theories and to divide. Be watchful of these groups that reach out with a false welcoming hand to children and are anxious to rise above others.

With grace, we also want to be watchful of ourselves, always returning to Jesus' words about welcoming the children and being based in love. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy