***Ordinary 26ª: Changing Our Minds is a Good Thing If….***

On my trip to Madagascar I had the opportunity to get a new perspective. First I arrived in Paris and thought, this is different, French!, but nice….good food, water etc, different 110 outlets. Next I landed in Antananarivo, very simple, I thought. Private room, small with a bathroom, bed with mosquito net, city traffic noise, Malgache, and running water, (but don’t drink it!) Then we traveled 14 hours by van to Mahajanga. Simpler still…… The sisters were so cordial I don’t think I realized *how* simple. 1 water spigot, bucket baths, open air, open to all sounds, such as snoring, dogs, singing, and more Malgache. Then, after 8 days we reversed the trip. My trip home covered flights over 4 days. AND EVERYTHING LOOKED REALLY DIFFERENT! In Antananarivo, my own bathroom! Just cars honking at night! Cooler. Wow, I can drink the water in Paris. Long shower! Such food! Then Detroit with phone calls! English!! And finally my house….. It’s like a palace! I’m a king in his Versailles! My experience really helped me to change the way I looked at things. Life has opened me up to God’s graces in a new way.

In the gospel today we hear of two sons, one who changed his mind, the other who did not. Those who heard Jesus’ question would have said that the son who did not embarrass his father actually gave the better answer, even though he didn’t intend to follow through. That is because they were immersed in a shame-honor culture that said “No matter what, don’t bring shame to yourself or especially not to your elders.” So Jesus approves what is in fact the wrong answer. He says, “Don’t worry about how it looks, don’t worry if you look silly, don’t worry if you get shamed, just do the right thing when you figure out what it is.” Hence, St. Paul in the second reading invites us all to have among ourselves the same attitude that is also in Christ, that ***though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped, rather he emptied himself…..*** He shamed himself in front of everyone as he suffered and died on the cross—and God greatly exalted him!

So I offer that changing our mind is a good thing if we become more like Christ along the way. STEAM: Keep on believing!

**Changing our mind about a** **prejudice** against someone is a good thing if we can see them with Christ’s eyes. *Metanoia*, the Greek word for conversion, means “change our mind.” **Readjusting our priorities** is a good thing if we manage more time for family and for personal reflection. **Changing how we feel about our possessions** is excellent if we adopt Christ’s attitude of gratitude for the blessings in our lives. What is essential is that we respond to the offer of grace that God gives us.

So friends, I invite us to do the most difficult of spiritual exercises: look at life through Christ’s eyes. This will change the way we look at things. Life will give us the opportunity. We really don’t have to DO anything. Work, sickness, family events…..we’ll have lots of opportunities to look and find Christ in front of us. Graced moments are seeking us out and all we have to do is look, and look again, and look again. Jesus will show us how rich we are, how blessed, and how equipped we are. Just take a long loving look at what God has placed in front of us as gift. If we accept the lessons Christ is giving us in our daily lives we too will experience the lifting up, the exaltation, that God promises to those who follow Him.