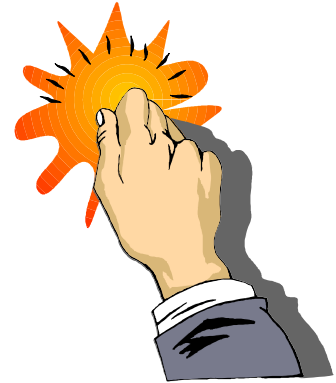


The Wordless Sermon

A member of a local parish, who previously had been attending Sunday Mass regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the Pastor decided to visit him.



It was a chilly evening. His Pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his Pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led the priest to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.



The Pastor made himself at home. He said nothing. In the deep silence, the Pastor contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, he took the fire tongs, and carefully picked up a brightly burning ember. He placed it to one side of the hearth, all alone.

Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

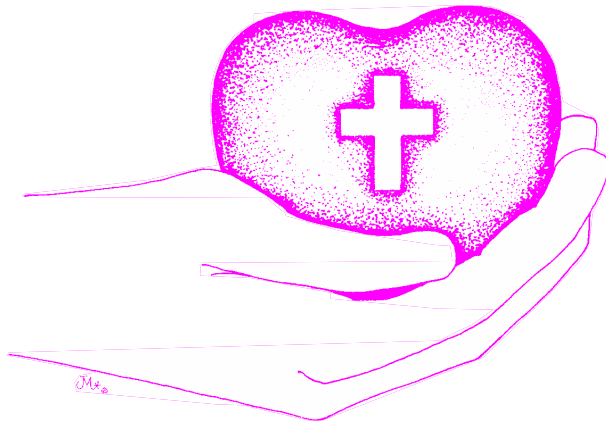
The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow. Then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

No one spoke a word since the initial greeting. The Pastor glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, with the light and warmth of the other burning coals.



As the Pastor reached the door, his host, with a tear running down his cheek, said "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for your sermon. I shall be back at Mass next Sunday."

Our world today often says too little with too many words or too much noise. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best sermons are the wordless ones.



Sr. Emilie Ann, SND