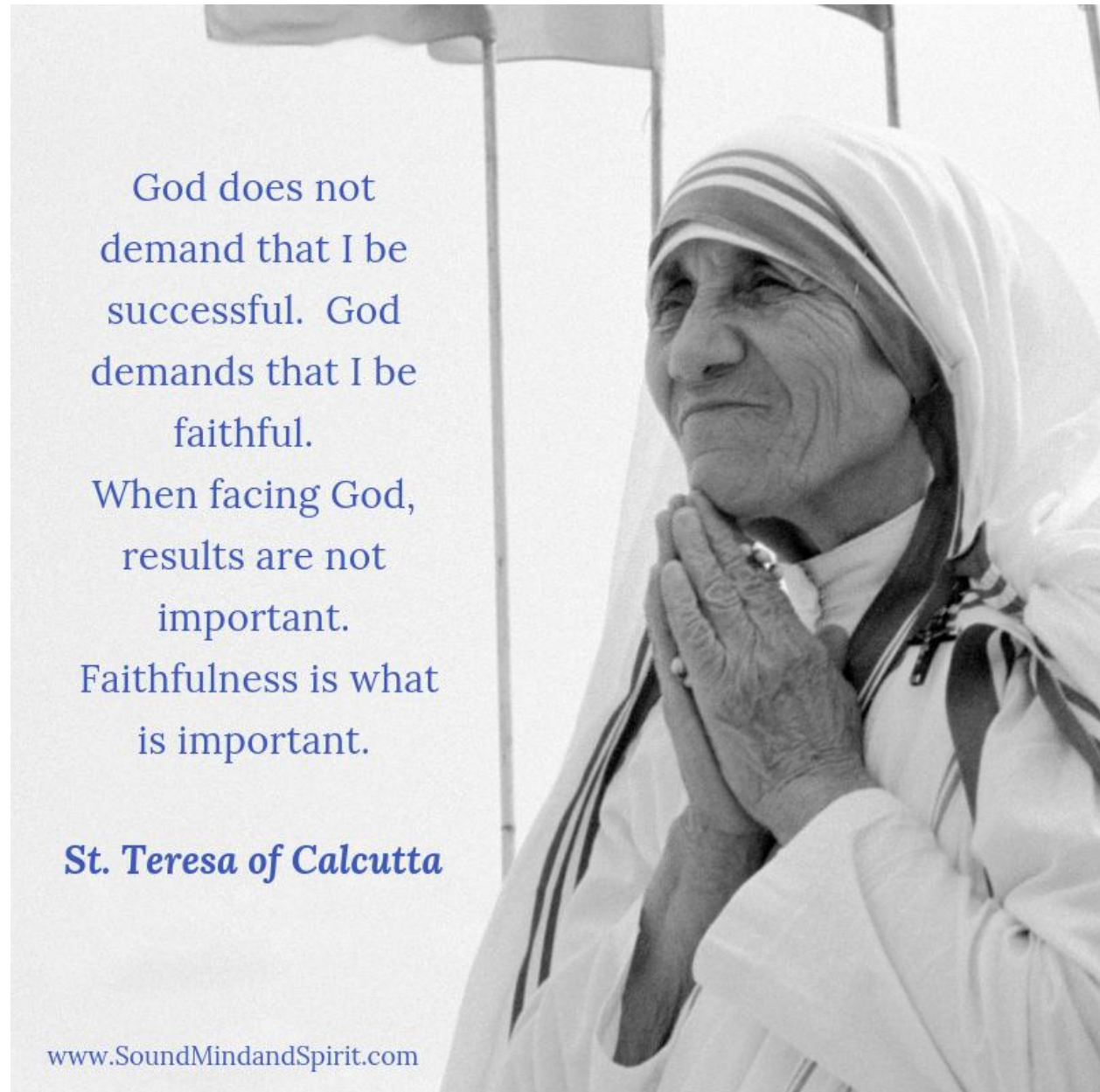


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** “[King] Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel to deliver the servants who trusted in him; they disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.’” ~ Daniel 3:95



I’ve always loved this reading about King Nebuchadnezzar and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the Book of the Prophet Daniel. For the complete scripture passage please click here [Daniel, CHAPTER 3 | USCCB](#).

The first thing we see in the passage is the faithfulness of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They refuse to worship false gods. They stay true to the Lord our God even to the point of willingly going into the white-hot fire.

Archbishop Emeritus ListECKi of Milwaukee was one of my priest professors when I was in the seminary. Our class was his final Moral Theology class before he was ordained a bishop. One of the things he used to love to do in class was throw difficult moral scenarios at us and ask us what we would do, how we would advise a member of our parish who comes to us with a difficult moral situation, etc.

One time he painted the scenario for one of my classmates. He said to my classmate, "You're the Cardinal Archbishop of the capital city of country ruled by an anti-Catholic, anti-Christian dictator. They arrest you. They threaten to kill you if you don't publicly deny the faith on TV. You believe them. They will put you on TV and execute you unless you deny the faith on TV so all your people can see it. What do you do?"

Shockingly, my classmate said, "I'd deny the faith." Archbishop ListECKi exploded, and a great debate ensued. I could not believe that my classmate could possibly be so faithless. I wondered how he could possibly be in seminary studying for the priesthood. The priesthood is a calling that demands that we give our lives over to Christ Jesus; it demands a great deal of faithfulness. It never surprised me that my classmate left the priesthood after about a year and a half.

The faithfulness that he needed to get through the challenging times just wasn't there. And, make no mistake, we do live in challenging times. Faithfulness to our Lord Jesus is required and will see us through.

But, our reading from Book of the Prophet Daniel shows us that there is more to it than just being faithful to the Lord. What we see in King Nebuchadnezzar is that faithfulness leads to something; it leads to something that is even greater than faithfulness. It leads to conversion.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego give us a real example of the ultimate in faithfulness. They willingly going into the white-hot fire rather than deny the Lord our God. And in doing so, they bring conversion to the heart and mind of King Nebuchadnezzar. The king recognizes the Lord our God when he exclaimed, *"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel to deliver the servants who trusted in him."*

In the next line of scripture, we can see how deep the King's conversion is,

*“Therefore I decree for nations and peoples of every language that whoever blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut to pieces and his house made into a refuse heap. For there is no other God who can rescue like this.” (Daniel 3:96)*

When we are faithful to the Lord something greater comes into the world, the conversion of the hearts and minds of others. It is our faithfulness that allows us to introduce people to the Lord, to help them develop their relationship with the Lord and to help lead them to ever greater discipleship and love for the Lord.

If we want people to realize the Grace of a deep and abiding faith, then we must first be faithful ourselves so that we can be the instrument of the Lord that brings the people around us to our Lord Jesus.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.