

This tsunami has touched people more than many other world events. As terrible as it was, it has helped unite the world more than divide it. No nation is taking up sides against another in this cause. There are no arguments over who's right and who's wrong. The only enemy is the earth that quaked. The earth is one of the few things we all have in common – Americans, Iraqis, Israelis, Palestinians. We need the earth to live, even though it unleashes unpredictable destruction on its inhabitants. A tsunami takes lives, but it is not like war. It unites nations in compassion. Here at home, our two parishes contributed nearly \$2000 to Catholic Relief Services for the victims. Thank you for your support.

That kind of generosity has sprung up all over the world. If only we could bottle it! But human beings make enemies with one another. It sometimes takes a natural disaster to remind us we don't have to act like enemies all the time. This tsunami has called people to shoulder responsibilities for the needy half a world away. We owe the same compassion to other victims. Genocide is happening in Darfur, just as it did in Europe during World War II. Today history is judging harshly those who did not try to stop the holocaust of the Jews. The next generation will judge us about Sudan: Did we do anything to stop the killing?

Most of us have enough problems of our own. It's hard enough to keep peace in the family, without also needing to keep peace in the world. But the two are related. If we build habits of compassion and care in our families, it builds a more peaceful world. Nations of the world turn to the United States with all our wealth, resources and intelligence, to help others improve their way of life. People in our neighborhoods should be able to turn to us with our faith, our church and our service to help them improve their lives. We have many blessings, and with those blessings come responsibilities. We may not have asked for them, but they are real.

In today's first reading Isaiah is prophesying to a people who have many blessings. They have just returned from exile to their homeland. They have their hands full, rebuilding the Temple, their houses and their businesses. But in today's prophecy God tells them even though their hands are full, it is not enough. "It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." Israel was brought back home not just so that God could save the chosen people, but so that God could save the world. The chosen people had to get the message out.

We sometimes receive responsibilities we never asked for. At school, a friend may need you to stand up for something with courage. At work, you may put in extra hours for the benefit of the company. At home, you may give up some free time to a family member who just needs a little love. We don't always ask for the extra work, but sometimes God gives it to us. God says, "It is too little for you to be my servant; I will make you a light to the nations."