

In the 1940's Karol Wojtyla wrote a letter saying he was going into the seminary to follow his vocation, but not because he thought he was going to change the world or anything. Karol Wojtyla is now Pope John Paul II. He could have said, "Why bother?" and nobody would have challenged him.

Today's Gospel records a miracle which shouldn't really have stood out. Jesus meets a deaf person with a speech impediment, whom he takes aside in private, away from the crowd, and cures. This intimate moment between Jesus and one person who needed help could have been lost; we're lucky to have this story at all.

Jesus seems reluctant about the cure. He's torn between his compassion for the sick and his exasperation with the crowd. Their rumors about him completely twisted what he was trying to do. The more he worked miracles, the more people suspected Jesus was some kind of a magician, or the messiah of an earthly reign. They were drawn by his power to change things, but oblivious to his desire that they change themselves. Jesus could have backed away from this miracle. There must have been plenty of lepers, cripples, and dying relatives he sadly left alone. He had a good excuse not to help--the crowd would only misunderstand again. But very simply he decided to assist in private. The crowd misunderstood, but one disabled person could speak and hear again.

We have many excuses not to help. What good would it do to pick up one piece of litter, to correct a child once more, to cast one vote, to contribute to a cause. It's easy to think, "Why bother?" But greatness lies in littleness. It lies in doing the good that no one notices. That's how Jesus works in us today.