

They asked Frank White once what was the most frustrating part about playing for the Royals. He said, "The fans don't appreciate how good we really are." And he's right. They say that the most difficult task in any professional sport is to hit a ball with a bat. Pitchers throw so fast that only the sharpest eye can co-ordinate the swing. I couldn't begin to appreciate the talent needed to play well.

No matter our field, we do a lot of work that goes unnoticed. People little appreciate the art of cooking, the care of cleaning, the love of child-rearing, the intricacies of our jobs.

Enter Jesus of Nazareth. Goes to his home town to preach. The people are impressed, but they're suspicious. "Who does he think he is? God Almighty?" Jesus felt unnoticed. People were the same then as they are now: we expect God to work miracles in some other place, not here, in some other time, not now, to other people, not to us. We won't appreciate what Jesus can do.

Jesus could have given up at this point, figuring, "It'll never work. They won't listen to me." After all, they make an attempt on his life, trying to throw him off cliff. I don't know about you, but I don't like to walk into situations where my life is threatened. If someone bumps the rear of my car in the middle of the night now, I'm going to keep right on driving.

But Jesus goes back, he keeps preaching for whatever difference it's going to make. And, of course, in the end it makes a tremendous difference.

There's a lesson here for all prophets who feel underappreciated in their own country--for parents, workers, all who know they're doing a good job, even if know one else does. The lesson is it is worth it: a little bit will make a difference.

The lesson is for the Church: Won't people listen to the pro-life movement? Let's keep the banner high. The lesson is for society: Is the drug problem ~~is~~ beyond our control? It's not; we can make a difference if we're willing to act.

There's a story about a young man who was walking the shore of a beach when he noticed ahead of him an old woman walking slowly. Nothing unusual about that; the rosy sunset, the smell of salt in the air, the call of the birds would bring anyone out on such an evening. But he noticed her stop every few steps to reach down into the sand and throw something into the ocean. Curious, he walked up and asked her what she was doing. "Starfish," she said. "These starfish have been washed ashore. They'll die if I don't throw them back in." She reached into the sand again, found another starfish and hurled it into the waters. The young man looked ahead and behind him, all along the shore. He said to the old woman, "You must be crazy! Do you have any idea how long this beach is? And how many starfish there must be on the shore? What difference could it possibly make?" The waves slapped up against their feet, making them wet. She stooped down, picked up another of her precious creatures and held it for him to see. "It makes a difference to this one." And she threw it into the water.