

June 8, 2008
Sunday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Hosea 6:3-6

Psalms 50:1, 8, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 4:18-25

Matthew 9:9-13

Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

I recently watched the movie, *Charlie Wilson's War*. It was a true story I had not heard before. Charlie, played by Tom Hanks, is a congressman from Texas who stumbles across the war in Afghanistan being waged by the Soviet Union in the mid 1980's. With the help of a rogue CIA agent, he gets the US to covertly help the Afghanistan government. While the way he did this makes for an interesting movie, what struck me most was that Charlie began this journey because his heart was touched by the plight of the people in Afghanistan. All he had to do was walk through the refugee camps and his reluctance to get involved was gone. On the other hand, the powers that be in the US Congress were moved to increase funding because Charlie exchanged their yes vote for this venture with his yes vote for something they wanted. They supported his cause for an amount around a billion dollars. When the war was won and the Soviets were out of the country, they were done. All of Charlie's efforts to garner the funds for a small school and other humanitarian acts to rebuild the country were in vain. I walked away from the movie feeling sad that their hearts were never moved by the plight of these people. It was an act of expediency, not mercy. What then does it mean to live in mercy as a people today? How do we respond today to the needs of others, large and small, global and right next-door?

"Cowardice asks the question: is it safe? Expediency asks the question: is it politic? Vanity asks the question: is it popular? But conscience asks the question: is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular- but one must take it simply because it is right."

Martin Luther King Jr. 1929-1968