



Daily Reflections

THE LOST SHEEP

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

Then he summoned his Twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness.

Jesus sent out these Twelve after instructing them thus, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."

MATTHEW 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Reflection

This short passage from the Gospel of Matthew reminds us of what we're called to as disciples of Jesus. It is so easy to read, yet Jesus has a seemingly impossible expectation of us: cure, heal, raise the dead, drive out demons. If I break this down a little bit, and digest it in small amounts, it makes sense. Jesus was asking the apostles to do the same as he was doing in his public ministry. What we're called to might look a bit different, though no less important than the first disciples. We might not be physically healing anyone, and yet often we can provide healing to others, especially spiritually and emotionally, by simply being present to another. To express and show our care for others by listening and engaging with those who might be struggling or suffering from mental anguish -- that is a form of healing. Sending a text or email might be just what someone else needs at that very moment in time. What is it we are being asked to be aware of and respond to during this time of Advent? Listen! Be watchful! These are the words we hear over and over during Advent ... don't skip over them.

The final sentence of this passage: "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." As I reflect on all I have received throughout my life, especially the gift of friendship, presence, care, love, and belonging; how am I, in turn, giving? How do I spend my time? Resources? Gifts and talents? The only way to repay the gift of faith and life in Christ is to give of myself in ways that impact others for their good. I hear Jesus' call to the disciples, to you and me, this day.

Advent is a wonderful time to reflect on our own generosity of heart. How and with whom do we spend our time? Do we stretch ourselves to serve and be with those who might be the "lost sheep" in today's world, and most especially, in our own families and neighborhoods? Perhaps there is something "lost" within your own life that needs your attention to be fully who you are called to be.

This is a time to go inward and hear where you are being called to serve. It is a time to be alert and watchful to the winds of the Holy Spirit that gently blow within and around you. Be the gift God created you to be for the world!



Orchard City, CO
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- Who might be the lost sheep in your family, community, friends, workplace, faith community? How might you respond in a manner that expresses your love and care for them?
 - Are there parts of your own faith journey that could be considered "lost sheep?" What might you feel called to do to bring these parts of yourself back into wholeness?
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For Prayer

*We pray for the gift of perception and wisdom
as we reflect on who might be the "lost sheep" in our lives.*

*May we have the grace to respond generously
to those in need of care and attention.*

*May our presence be one that flows
from a heart filled with the love of God
and for all of God's creatures and creation.*

Amen.

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