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Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

THE LIVING WORD

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Today's Gospel Acclamation

*The word of God is living and effective,
discerning reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

HEBREWS 4:12

Reflection

On this twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we are blessed with readings that encourage attentiveness to the Word of God, mutual support, and personal commitment to living the Word in our daily lives. It is easy to live the Word when life is going well, and relationships are strong and supportive. It is another thing to live in fidelity when I am personally struggling, or when uncontrollable circumstances cause anxiety, confusion, and anger, such as our own social-political reality today.

The Word of God is always living and effective, though I may be blind to God's dynamic presence in the moment. Especially in these times, continued faith and reliance on the indwelling presence of God has the power to sustain and encourage me. Fidelity to personal prayer restores me and enables me to better discern God's presence and direction in our times, all the while collaborating with people of good will.

Like Moses in the first reading today, (Exodus 17:8-13), I am called to pray, support, and engage in the realities of life for the sake of the community. And when I grow weary, or sense discouragement, I rely on the community of believers to encourage and shore up my belief in God's abiding presence. The truth is, God saves us in community. We need one another all the time. My faith and trust in God are a personal reality nurtured and sustained in practice and in relationship with others who know, love, and trust God to be among us and fortified in one another.

Our shared relationship with God strengthens us to live out lives of mercy, compassion, care for the common good, and protection of the dignity of all. When my personal resolve wanes, I find comfort in the knowledge and experience of the faith of friends and community who continue to work for the common good while they pray and support those of us who are weary until strength is restored.

Together we discern what is good, true, and right for this moment in time. Personal and communal discernment enables us to live faithfully all that God is asking of us today. The ask is often a challenge and requires courage to stand true to the ways of God. Yet, discerning what is of God, even if demanding, is essential to living the WORD. We are strengthened by the ongoing prayer and support of all whose faith is lived aloud in our midst, no matter that our response may not be politically correct. Discerning and living God's Word among us requires courage and moral stamina in the face of bigotry, hatred, abuse of power over the most vulnerable among us. The reading from 2 Timothy 4: 2 reminds us:

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus,
...proclaim the word;
be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient;
convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.*



*Gracious and loving God,
you have sustained us in every circumstance of our lives.
I am grateful for your indwelling presence
that calls me to always live in your ways.
Teach me, guide me, strengthen me for the journey through life
amid turbulent times that are so contrary to your desire
that all people and creation be One in You.
Stir up love, mercy, compassion within me*

*that I might discern your presence, your will, and your direction
each day of my life.*

May I live faithfully by first belonging to you.

Amen.

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