



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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ONLY THROUGH PRAYER

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

*"Why could we not drive the spirit out?"
He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."*

MARK 9:29

Reflection

The gospel today is the story about healing a boy with a life-long illness that threw him into convulsions which often were life-threatening. Now we might say he was afflicted with a malady like epilepsy. No matter what the apostles tried, they were unable to cure the boy. Naturally, everyone watching had a freely given opinion about what could be done.

I am reminded of the value of discernment to sort and sift a situation to discover, in Ignatian terms, "what spirit is at work." Discernment is a spiritual practice, a grace that allows me to gather data, ask questions, assess the situation, ponder how best to proceed, listen deeply to the Spirit of God dwelling in my being, and prayerfully come to an informed decision. Prayer, silence, reflection, honest assessment, and inner freedom are essential to discernment. Discernment, while personal, is about living a life in God's presence and will.

Whether in exploring my own emotional response/reaction – or within the context of ministry, personal prayer, everyday life, and the human condition – discernment is ultimately a process of seeking to live in the ways of God and by the grace of God. This requires openness, humility, and a realization that I am loved by God.

As with the apostles, their inability to heal the boy, was not about the zeal, desire, skills, or ego of the men involved. This healing was about the power of God at work in them, in the world, and in the boy. Prayer, consciously and humbly engaging God as the source of strength, while fasting from ego, pride, and bravado, is necessary to open oneself to the flow of God's desire for the boy. Calling upon the Holy Spirit in humble petition and faith in God's loving desire for wholeness and wellbeing of another is always appropriate. Then, one waits on God.



For Pondering

- How do I sort through the “stuff” of my life so I can more readily choose what is of God?
- When, where, and how do I rely on God as the source of life?
- How have I recognized the Holy Spirit at work within me?
- What has shaped me to be more humble, more reliant on God?

Closing Prayer

Most loving God, bring light to the darkness of my heart, show me the way to proceed. You are the source of life and all that is true, healing, and life-giving. Help me recognize your loving presence and desire in all I do. I call upon your abiding Spirit to help me discern and engage life more fully. You are my constant companion. I turn to you to guide me and all I do. Amen

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