

March 28, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH LENT

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LIFTED UP

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*Jesus said to them,
"When you lift up the Son of Man,
then you will realize that I AM,
and that I do nothing on my own,
but I say only what the Father taught me.
The one who sent me is with me.
He has not left me alone,
because I always do what is pleasing to him."
Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.*

JOHN 8:28-30

Reflection

Symbolism is plentiful in sacred scripture. Today's readings from the Hebrew Bible and the Christian testament are tied together by the symbol of the bronze serpent at the time of Moses wandering in the desert, and the crucifixion of Jesus. God saved his people from the deadly bite of venomous snakes. This image is referenced in the person of Jesus who gives his life for us raised up on the cross. His total self-emptying love is the promise of forgiveness and life forever. Jesus overcomes death and promises all who believe in him eternal life.

I must admit that focus on Jesus on the cross, giving his life for me and for many, is at once a grace of faith and hope, as well as a challenge to my human sensibilities. My heart aches at the reality of the crucified Jesus. The crucifixion in all its horror seems too much at times. Yet, it is the total gift of self for love of all humankind and fidelity to his mission to be God's great love in the world that leads to Jesus' death like a common criminal on the cross. All this for the love of you and me.

The stretch is that to get to resurrection one must endure the cross. Jesus shows us the way to self-giving love. Jesus speaks truth to power and witnesses to the desire of God that all be in right relationship with God and with one another. Our world is at once wounded and beautiful. The world needs healing and compassion as well as reverence and respect as a gift of God for us.

As Christian, I am invited to look upon the face of Jesus on the cross and see the outpouring of extravagant love. At the same time, I also look upon the face of Jesus' great love lived every day in compassion, mercy, and forgiveness and am called to do the same. I am invited to put on the "mind of Jesus" (Philippians 2) and err on the side of compassion and mercy rather than judgment and condemnation. In the daily acts of dying and rising, I am to humbly give my own life in acts of self-emptying love.

As Jesus was not left alone but knew the Father's abiding presence, so, too, are we never left alone. We are the heirs of God's great love found in Jesus who is our companioning presence through the ups and downs, conflicts, struggles, and joys of life. We, too, are to be God's great love in the world by the grace of "I AM" who abides in us.



Photo by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

For Pondering

- What is my response to “Jesus being lifted up” on the cross?
- What is the ascent to faith and my own affective response to Jesus’ total gift of self?

- How am I invited to daily dying to self for the sake of life for others?

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