

November 12, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

SALVATION COMES FROM THE LORD!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Responsorial Psalm

The Salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

Trust in the Lord and do good, that you may dwell in the land and be fed in security.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will grant you your heart's requests.

The Lord watches over the lives of the wholehearted; their inheritance lasts forever.

By the Lord are the steps of a man made firm, and he approves his way.

Turn from evil and do good, that you may abide forever;

The just shall possess the land and dwell in it forever.

PSALM 37:3-4, 18 AND 23, 27 AND 29

Reflection

Today I continue my reflection on the insights I gained by watching the documentary, **26 to Life**. It is a documentary on redemption through choosing good over evil and hope over despair. This film follows the lives of a number of inmates at San Quentin and their journey of discovering how to make choices in their lives that lead to changing their hearts and minds to being the persons God created them to be. It is centered on their membership in the 1000-mile club, a running club inside the walls of the prison with the goal to run the annual marathon at San Quentin.

It is also a story about the volunteers who come to coach and companion these athletes who are inmates doing their time for the crimes they committed. These volunteers are men and women who have freely chosen, through their expertise in long distance running, to support these men in their journey of self-discovery.

These volunteers are witnesses to the transformation that occurs in the members of the 1000-mile club. What transpires over the year, as the inmates train for the annual marathon inside San Quentin, is the transformation of the heart of these men. They come to know themselves, they reflect on the ill-advised decisions that led to their convictions, and they come to realize the harm they have inflicted on their victims.

The coaches, these volunteers, realize that while they first came to San Quentin to help train these men in the skills of long-distance running, now they are witnesses and companions on the road to redemption. They come to know these men as more than inmates or the crimes they've committed; they come to know them as men hungry for conversion of heart, for reconciliation, and for forgiveness.

I was intrigued by these volunteer coaches because they were older in age and did not fear the men whom they were coaching. They came to know them as individuals who made bad and horrific choices earlier in their lives and were serving their time. These volunteers give encouragement and companionship to these often-forgotten men behind bars.

I find these volunteer coaches inspiring because they have not forgotten that behind the crimes stand men who are seeking to change their lives from the inside out. They are truly companions on the journey -- and are we not all called to this type of companionship of our brothers and sisters?

Pray today's responsorial psalm as it speaks to trust, doing good, and turning from evil. The volunteer coaches at San Quentin have looked past the numbers that replace the names of the inmates; they see beyond the crimes the inmates

have committed. They see these men and are witnesses to the conversion taking place among the 1000-mile club members. No one is unseen before God. Who are we to judge? Are we not all called to companionship for those seeking to find their way back to God?



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio

For Pondering

- While most of us are not called to this type of ministry behind prison walls, we *are* called to journey with others as our earthly lives unfold. Who, in your sphere of influence, might be trapped by internal prison walls that separate them from the fullness of life? How might you gently cross the gates of these walls and offer your companionship?
 - Reflect on your own life. Perhaps there are invisible walls within you that separate you from God. How might you gently deconstruct this wall and grow ever closer to God?
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For Prayer

*O God of our salvation,
may we seek out the “prisoners” among us,
encouraging those who are lonely or abandoned,*

*and bring your light to their lives.
Let us not allow fear or circumstances to impede
the love of your Spirit working within and among us.
Amen.*

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