



Daily Reflections

HOLY PERSEVERANCE

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

From Today's First Reading

*"Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters,
when you encounter various trials,
for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
And let perseverance be perfect,
so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
But if any of you lacks wisdom,
he should ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly,
and he will be given it."*

JAMES 1:2-5

Reflection

Perseverance is born in struggle and faith. When faced with life's challenges as mentioned in the above scripture, humility requires that we pray for the grace

to weather the storm, exercise some self-will, and learn to use trial and error leading to fuller life. My dad used to say, "Do your best with what comes your way." Also, he said, "What doesn't kill you will strengthen you as you try again and again." He usually said this in a conflictual circumstance or struggle. At the time, I was not thrilled with his counsel. Yet, I knew there was truth in his words. In hindsight, his own life witnessed to an inner strength that came from adversity overcome by patience, sustained effort, loving relationships, and dependence on God.

When I made vows as a Sister of St. Joseph, I was filled with delight, great enthusiasm and grace pressed down and overflowing. The welcoming reception line of elder sisters wished me welcome and "Holy Perseverance." This was said not once but again and again over the years. Experiencing a youthful naivete, full of zeal and idealism, I was a little puzzled as to their meaning. What did I know about the turns of life?

Fifty-four years later, I have grown to appreciate the sentiment, as well as the strength that comes from the gift of perseverance, as I engaged life's adversities and struggles. The ups and downs of life have shaped me, sanded down my ego, and deepened my dependence on God.

Our lives are a mixture of deep joy, contentment, and satisfaction, as well as periodic hardships, struggles, heartache, inner angst, and confusion. Day by day, hanging in there -- with all life brings -- enables us to grow into a better self, to deepen in love and gratitude. As we learn to live by faith and to cooperate with grace, the mix of life works together and paves the way for greater delight, inner strength, and confidence. St. James, my Dad, and my Sisters had it right: ***"Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."***



Green leafed tree
Photo by Vlad Chetan

For Pondering

- What have been life's struggles and trials that have shaped you?
 - How has inner strength, faith, and hope been honed by the mix of life?
 - For what do you pray in gratitude?
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For Prayer

Loving God of Life,

I pray once more for the grace of holy perseverance.

*Strengthen my faith, transform my stubborn pride and self-will
into holy indifference which allows me to have faith, hope, and trust in You
as the source and strength for my life.*

Let gratitude fill my being and inspire my serving.

*I rejoice in knowing that your love and abiding presence
are always with me. I place all my hope in you.*

Amen.

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