

February 27, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

LOOKING BEYOND

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., NOBEL PEACE PRIZE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, 1964

Reflection

What is your understanding of evil? There are many definitions including Scripture helping to define it. Lent opens with Jesus encountering temptation through the Prince of Evil, Satan, and Pope Francis offers, "Lent is a spiritual battle against the spirit of evil." (2015 Lenten Message)

Serving in the District Attorney's Office for thirteen years, there were many examples of evil to expand my understanding of it. The means and variety of

heartless and intentional malicious acts were at times unfathomable.

Particularly confounding to me were serial killers and at the time there were three active related prosecutions underway. My office was located in the Homicide Unit for five years of my tenure with the office, and thus afforded me a first-hand glimpse of the rigor and dedication of those who sought to find justice for the victims of such heinous acts.

Over time, I came to know other types of evil: child and elder abuse, human trafficking, fraud, domestic violence and environmental crimes to name a few. Expressions of evil are seemingly endless, the results of which can be tangibly observed. While we may consider these types of occurrences remarkable, the frequency of mass shootings, road-rage incidents, smash-and-grab robberies, political oppression, and genocides would indicate otherwise. Other examples to contemplate: acts of exclusion and hate, demeaning or disrespectful words or actions, prejudice and classicism, consumerism, and disregard for the health of the environment.

“Every year, at the beginning of Lent...the temptations of Jesus in the desert reminds us that the life of the Christian, in the footsteps of the Lord, is a battle against the spirit of evil.” (*Pope Francis, February 20, 2021 Angelus*) The Lenten journey takes us to a renewal of our baptismal vows, to reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises. What does that mean for you?



Sun Amid the Clouds
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

- What's your experience or sense of evil?
- How do you remain hopeful in the midst of the harsh realities of evil?

- How does the Holy Spirit companion you when walking through the valley of darkness?
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For Prayer

*The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;
he restores my soul.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.*

*You set a table before me
in front of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me
all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for endless days.*

PSALM 23, NIV VERSION

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