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Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

COURAGE IN FAITH

By Alicia M. Rodriguez

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

He entered a boat, made the crossing, and entered into his own town. And there people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven."

MATTHEW 9:1-2

Reflection

A while back I was able to see a live exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. The exhibit consisted of three individuals climbing a ramp. None of them ever made it to the top for long; the ropes they used to pull themselves up were interwoven, and they often crossed paths ... yet they never really acknowledged the others. Eventually they all settled at the bottom, and then they were finally able to make it to the top by acknowledging each other and encouraging one another.

Today's gospel reminds us that, through our faith, we can find courage in our most difficult times, including times in which we need to ask forgiveness of others and times where others are asking us to forgive them -- and that the key is community.

As we see with the paralytic on the stretcher, this person was not alone. Other people took him to Jesus. The paralytic had faith in the people surrounding him, and he had faith that Jesus would heal him.

Jesus tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven, and people accuse Jesus of blasphemy. Jesus then asks the crowd *"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?"* After that he orders the paralytic to get up and go home -- and he does just that.

Sometimes in life we find ourselves in situations that require us to have faith even though we are in a season that is hard and lonely. In those times, we need to rely on people who are willing to accompany us on our difficult journey. We need to allow them to help us find the courage to continue moving forward, having faith that whatever the outcome is ... it is exactly what we need. (Even if what we need may not be what we want.)

It can be difficult to forgive others, and sometimes we may not want to -- but we find the courage to do so. Even if it doesn't make us feel better, or it doesn't heal the trust that was damaged, it might be that the lesson was intended for the person who wronged us. Or perhaps we weren't aware that we also wronged that person -- and God has given us insight to find the courage to acknowledge that we also caused harm and should ask for forgiveness.

God works through us to reach others; it only makes sense that he works through others to reach us. Remember that the next time you have a difficult time forgiving someone or asking for forgiveness.



MOCA Live Exhibit
Photo by Alicia M. Rodriguez

For Pondering

- Think of a time where the people around you helped you find courage in your faith. Was it easy to trust them? Was it hard? How did it change your perspective on walking through life with a community?
 - Has there ever been a time where you have felt “paralyzed” by sin? How did you find the courage to have faith that your sins had been forgiven?
 - Have you ever had to rely on your faith for the courage to forgive someone who hurt you? How did you feel after forgiving them?
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For Prayer

*Grant me, Lord,
the faith and courage to forgive others,
forgive myself, ask forgiveness from others, and ask forgiveness from You.
Allow my heart to be renewed with Your infinite love and mercy.
I ask that You continue to use me as a vessel
so that others may come to know You.
Amen.*

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