

January 18, 2024



Daily Reflections

GOD AMONG US

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Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*Jesus withdrew toward the sea with his disciples.... He had cured many and, as a result, those who had diseases were pressing upon him to touch him. And whenever unclean spirits saw Jesus, they would fall down before him and shout, “**You are the Son of God.**” He warned them sternly not to make him known.*

MARK 3:7, 10-12

Reflection

Looking around the globe I am keenly aware of myriad ways my dear neighbors are suffering. I am moved with sadness and compassion. Sad for the seeming “evil” imposed on ordinary and good people and their families. Moved with compassion in response to such suffering. My heart aches and my soul is weary for all who are suffering. My soul knows most intimately that what affects one

person influences us all. And today, technology informs us immediately of the violence, war, oppression, misdeeds, and struggle of countless people. We need a flesh-and-blood Jesus in our times, healing all “unclean spirits.”

And yet, the long-ago incarnation of God made flesh among us is now in our hands. As people of faith in every tradition, we know within ourselves the abiding presence of God. God is with us, within us, urgently urging all people of faith and good will to respond with compassion to the needs of our times.

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed and powerless when learning of the many people who are suffering. I also recognize the presence of God within me and among the majority of good folks in the world. It is important to seek God’s face, God’s presence among us. Naming the ways I recognize goodness, beauty, and the quiet revelation of God is a means of harnessing positive, God-life energy and releasing it into the world. Prayer is a powerful energy that dispels darkness. Prayer also encourages me to offer a blessing rather than a curse or angry retort.

I cannot control the other, nor the powerful “unclean spirits,” but I can live faithful to all that I have been taught by God and all that God’s desire, at work in me, urges me toward. I consciously choose to act with integrity and with the dignity of God-life in me, despite the “negative behavior and speech” that seems to bombard me. If enough good people consciously act with honesty, truth, putting the respect of others to work among us, the impact counteracts the ugliness.

It seems so simple, yet requires conscious effort and self-discipline to act with intention to reverence each person and live within right relationship and dignity. Perhaps graced response will silence the “unclean spirits” for a moment and make way for the widening circles of goodness to flow into our troubled yet beautiful world.



Silhouette of person raising hands
Photo by Pixabay

For Pondering

- What are my ways of shifting negative, angry energy to the power for good in my circles of influence?
 - How is God revealed to me each day in ordinary things?
 - In a world where darkness seems to be prevalent, what is the place of faith, hope, compassion in my life?
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For Prayer

*God of Love and Life, hold me close to your heart.
Inspire me to the good and all that is life-giving
even in the presence of darkness and negative words and actions.
Show me the way to live with your desire for humankind.
Strengthen my faith and trust in the power of good over evil.
Fill me with the strength of your love
so that my life in you may speak of goodness
and be a reminder of hope for all people, in every place,*

*especially where there is conflict that demeans and threatens life.
In you and through you, and with the power of your love and desire,
all humanity may flourish.*

Amen.

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