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Daily Reflections



OH, JONAH!

By Alicia Rodriguez

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

*Jonah then left the city for a place to the east of it,
where he built himself a hut and waited under it in the shade,
to see what would happen to the city.*

*And when the LORD God provided a gourd plant
that grew up over Jonah's head,
giving shade that relieved him of any discomfort,
Jonah was very happy over the plant.*

*But the next morning at dawn
God sent a worm that attacked the plant,
so that it withered.*

*And when the sun arose, God sent a burning east wind;
and the sun beat upon Jonah's head till he became faint.
Then Jonah asked for death, saying,
"I would be better off dead than alive."*

But God said to Jonah,
"Have you reason to be angry over the plant?"
"I have reason to be angry," Jonah answered, "angry enough to die."
Then the LORD said,
"You are concerned over the plant which cost you no labor
and which you did not raise;
it came up in one night and in one night it perished.
And should I not be concerned over Nineveh, the great city,
in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons
who cannot distinguish their right hand from their left,
not to mention the many cattle?"

JONAH 4:5-11

Reflection

Whenever I read the book of Jonah, it makes me giggle and laugh at how Jonah kept running away from what he was being called to do and, at times, how he thought he knew better than God. It's easy to say, "Oh, Jonah, you should have known better," or "Oh, Jonah, where is your compassion and love for others?"

When I was about 6 years old, I remember having my first "Jonah" moment. I knew that I had a piano recital coming up later that month. Having practiced the song *Greensleeves* for several months prior I became more lax in practicing the couple of weeks leading up to the recital. My dad consistently told me each day that I needed to practice, even though I knew the song, so that I would not make a mistake during the recital.

On the day of the recital, everything was going well until I got close to the end of the song. I completely forgot the rest of it and, because we were supposed to have our songs memorized, I didn't have my music sheet to aid me. I remember freezing for a moment and looked out at the audience. I made eye contact with my dad and then closed my eyes and thought about the music sheet and finished the song.

After I got off the stage, I was angry because my dad wasn't upset. He didn't say "I told you so" or scold me. Instead he was kind and with a soft smile said, "These things happen when we don't prepare, and the important thing is that now we know what happens when we think we know better."

To this day I still remember the embarrassment and humility that I felt that day. I also continue to practice *Greensleeves* as a reminder of my "Jonah" moment.

How often do we take the time to look deep within ourselves and see that we too have moments where we are like Jonah?



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For Pondering

- Can you recall a time where you were like Jonah? What did you learn from that moment?
 - Have you ever gotten angry with God? What are some things that helped you get over the anger?
 - What are some of the gourd plants that you have taken shelter under? How did you feel when they withered away?
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For Prayer

Prayer for Humility

Let me have too deep a sense of humor to be proud.

*Let me know my absurdity before I act absurdly.
Let me realize that when I am humble I am most human,
most truthful,
and most worthy of your serious consideration.*

DANIEL A. LORD, SJ

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