

February 13, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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SEEKING A SIGN

By Sister Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Gospel

The Pharisees came forward and began to argue with Jesus, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. He sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." Then he left them, got into the boat again, and went off to the other shore.

MARK 8:11-13

Reflection

This short exchange with the Pharisees occurs right after Jesus was moved with

compassion to feed 4,000 people in a Gentile territory, and just before he left the area with his disciples in the boat. During this brief encounter, Mark mentions that Jesus “sighed from the depth of his spirit,” which tells us that he was distressed by the request of the unbelieving religious leaders who demanded a sign from heaven (a sign from God) to give them proof of his messiahship. They questioned: who is this man who raises the dead, feeds the multitudes and heals the sick when they touch his garment? We see, in this passage, a human Jesus who refuses to answer their request for a sign. He knew they had come to test him; they did not come with the good will of someone who might be inclined to believe in Jesus.

Without giving them an answer, Jesus abruptly got into the boat with the disciples and left for the other side. We observe that Jesus had the same human emotions that we have, even exasperation! Jesus “**sighed from the depth of his spirit.**” He took a deep breath, realizing the Pharisees were not able to listen to him. So, he left them and went with his friends. It is interesting to note that, if we were to continue reading the following verses of Mark 8 (vs. 14-21), we would see that even the disciples in the boat were not able to fully understand Jesus’ message at that point. They would test Jesus’ patience many times. At least, the disciples were of good heart, and they continued to ask Jesus to break open the mystery and the wisdom he was offering them.



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For Pondering & Prayer

- Do you ever find yourself feeling exasperated when you sense that you are not being understood? When others don't really have a clue about what you value or who you really are? Would that be a time when you could ask Christ to be with you as you sigh from the depth of your spirit? Perhaps you wouldn't even have any words to say. Would he understand your pain? Could he understand your human frustration?
- Opening our thoughts and feelings to God can be a way to begin to pray about our situation. How God must yearn for us to open ourselves to the gift of love that awaits us.

There is a prayer I sometimes say that I have found consoling:

An Intimate Request

*How do you, Lord, look at me?
What do you feel in your heart for me?*

FR. JOHN EAGAN, SJ

Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits, p.85

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