

May 15, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Easter



Center for Spiritual Development

LOVE

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

A Reflection from Today's Readings

In the first reading from Acts, we listen in as St. Paul tells the presbyters of the Church of Ephesus that this would be the last time they see him. The people respond by showing their affection for St. Paul and many cry at the thought of never seeing him again.

This passage took me in a direction I did not see coming. I thought about how we are present to the people we love as they transition from this life to the next. There are many ways for us to show our love for those who are at the end of their earthly lives.

When I was new to my congregation, one of the most striking images I recall from those days is the gathering of Sisters around the bed of another Sister as she was close to death. Soon I found myself a part of the ritual of prayers being prayed and songs being softly sung as the Sister left this life for eternal life with God.

I've had the privilege of being with Sisters and others at their time of death. I consider these some of the most sacred times in my life. There is a peace in the room, a reverence for life itself, that never ceases to touch me at the soul level. It is the sense of being near to God and accompanying another on his or her journey to external life. It is a reminder of the sacredness of each life, and this comes with bittersweet joy of having known this person, while -- at the same time -- experiencing the sorrow in knowing it is time to let in love and trust.

I wonder how I might better cultivate this sense of love for another beyond the sacred time of the end of life. Words and expressions of love seem to flow so unabated as we pray our goodbyes to loved ones as death draws near. How might you and I cultivate this free-flowing expression of love in our everyday lives?



Saint Étienne du Mont (Paris)
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- When have you experienced expressions of deep love and appreciation from another? When have you shown deep love and expression for someone else? How did you experience God in these moments?
 - How does St. Paul's leaving, and the love for him shown by the people of the Church of Ephesus, impact you?
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For Prayer

*O God whose love for us was expressed
in the gift of his Son for our salvation,
let us be bearers of your love.*

*May our call to love one another be evident
in our hopes, dreams, choices, actions, and prayers.*

Let us love one another as you have loved us.

Amen.

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