

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

REPENT AND RECONCILE

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples, "Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the one through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him." And the Apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

LUKE 17:1-6

Reflection

26.2 to Life is a documentary I watched during a flight from Orange, CA to

Atlanta, GA a few months ago. The movie unfolds behind the tall and foreboding walls of San Quentin. I've driven by this prison on my ministerial travels in Northern California and each time I do, I find myself with a chill passing through my body and a sense of hopelessness for all those inside -- and for the victims and survivors of the crimes committed by those serving their time.

As the documentary concluded, I felt an internal shift in my sense of hopelessness for victims and offenders depicted in this film. I was reminded of the sense of hope and reconciliation we find in Jesus, and as we read in today's gospel. In the documentary, this hope and reconciliation does not flow from a sense of naivete; rather, it comes from walking with the inmates and those companioning them, and knowing that it is only through the work of the Spirit that we come to repentance and move toward reconciliation.

26.2 to Life is the story of the 1000-mile club, a running club inside San Quentin that inmates voluntarily join, where they set goals for themselves to achieve as they look toward the annual marathon inside the prison yard. Throughout the film, we are introduced to the inmates, we hear of their crimes, and we witness their inner transformation of heart from hardened criminals to repentant men who want to make different choices in their lives. For some of these men, the hope of ever getting out of San Quentin is slim to none, yet they are choosing to change their hearts of stone into hearts that want to do good with their lives inside or outside of prison.

It is a personal story of coming to manhood (as many committed their crimes when they were quite young). It is a self-reckoning with the damage they have inflicted on their victims and the families and friends of their victims. It is a reconciling with themselves and their own families in how the trajectory of so many lives has been negatively impacted by one or more bad choices they made and actions they took in their youth.

In such dire, violent, and dreary life behind prison walls, these men are choosing to do something different with their lives. They still have to live in a setting where harm can come to them without warning and there are codes of behavior expected of them by both fellow inmates and the guards themselves.

And yet they make choices to better themselves through education and running. Running becomes a form of prayer where self-reflection abounds. They are the recipients of the generous time and investment by "coaches" from the outside who volunteer their time and expertise to support the members of the 1000-mile club who long to complete the annual San Quentin Marathon.

As I watched this documentary, the fact that I was "flying" and free to move about the country was not lost on me. Am I willing to invest the time and effort it takes to be the person God intends me to be? Am I willing to put the work into bettering myself through the discipline of prayer, discernment, and self-reflection? Is this not part and parcel of being disciples of Christ Jesus? You and I have so much freedom of choice; how are we using it?

The documentary was inspirational in that we have a glimpse into life behind bars where some men have made the choice to commit to training for an annual marathon inside San Quentin for a variety of reasons. They expressed a desire to be better sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers; they experience running as a path that leads them down the road toward redemption.

What is your road? What is my road? Are we willing to put the time and commitment into growing our relationships with God? Will we put the sweat equity into our "yes" to God's call in our lives? We can find inspiration from the life of Jesus, the Saints, Scripture, prayer, and so many other avenues if we look through the eyes of faith. We can look to one another for support and inspiration to be the good in our world and in our daily lives. Let us run the race of faith in love, hope, humility, and trust together.

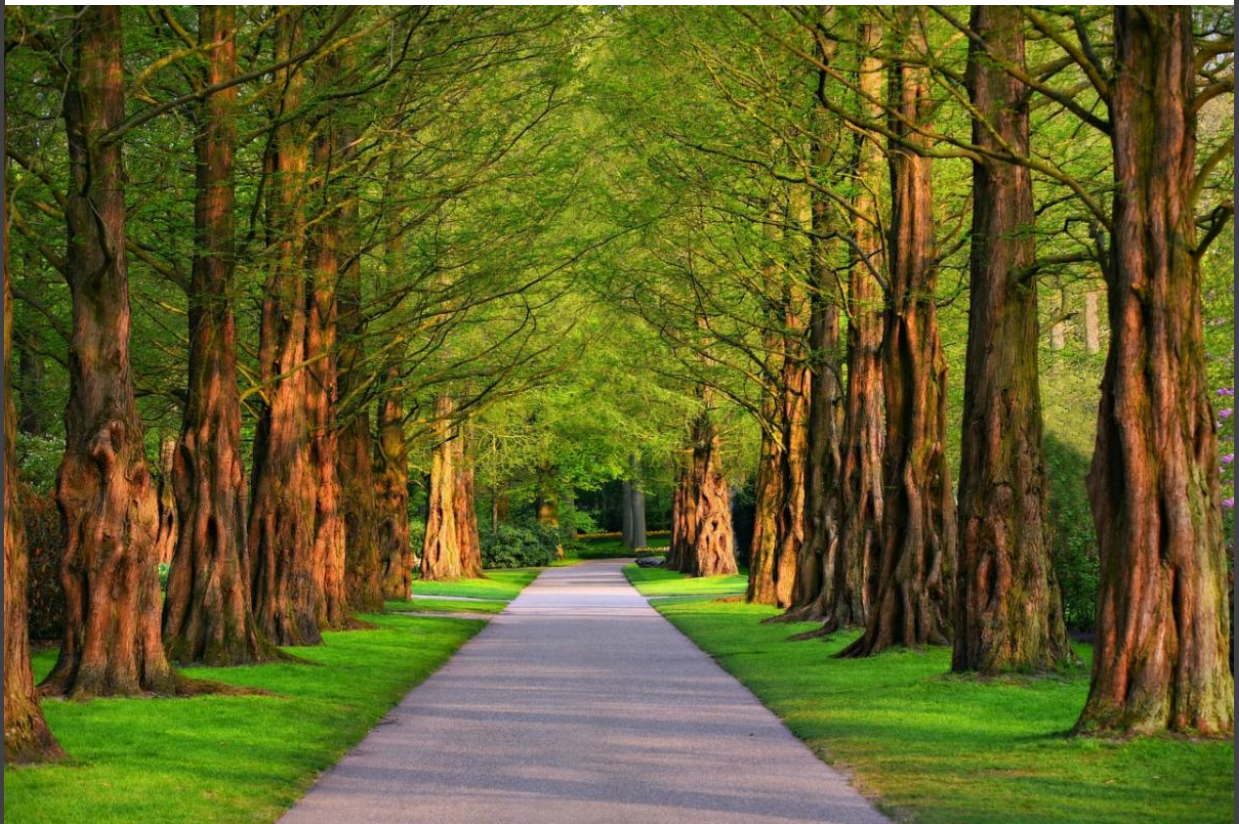


Photo by MabelAmber

For Pondering

- Who inspires you to live a life of faith? What are the supports you need to remain committed and persevere in faith when life's challenges arise?
 - How are you an inspiration to your spouse, children, friends, and members of your faith community?
 - What might you tweak or add to your repertoire of goodness that will enable you to be a more loving presence as you move through your day?
-

For Prayer

*O God who calls the faithful to service to the dear neighbor,
may our lives give testament to our unwavering love of you.*

*May we seek out those burdened by life circumstances
and be that glimmer of hope and light
needed for others to persevere and thrive this day.*

Amen.

**If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make
a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!**

Support CSD



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



Visit Website

714-744-3172

Join Mailing
List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street | Orange, CA 92868 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)