

Faith, Prayer and Presence



“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” Jn. 14:1

Jesus was speaking to his disciples here and it reminds me of Catherine’s words, *“Take from my heart all painful anxiety”*. Like Jesus, Catherine knew in her being that a troubled heart can be an ever present possibility.

A constant message of the gospels is freedom from anxiety. As Jesus faces his own death, he does not want his friends to be troubled of heart or spirit.

As we sit with our own individual awareness of losses borne, especially during this ‘sheltering-in-place’ time, we can also be mindful of the larger national and global community to which we belong. We spend time in prayer, not only for ourselves but for our communities: where countless displaced peoples can be found and seen; for a world where so many have now found themselves unemployed and wondering how much longer they can perhaps pay their mortgages or put food on the family dinner table. With this consciousness within us, perhaps the following words are particularly poignant and necessary:

“Take what he will from us, he still leaves his holy peace.” Catherine McAuley (1)

When we have sat long enough with Jesus and Catherine in this prayerful place of peace that lies beyond all that may have been taken from us, all the concerns and that which agitates us, we become filled with peace and can be advocates of peace. We know the gentle power of that peace that is one of the characteristics of those who sit in prayer, in deep contemplation and have learnt to trust in the Presence that enfolds and protects.

Jesus’ words can touch our hearts now. He is deeply concerned about our feelings and responses. He begins and ends saying: *“Let not your hearts be troubled”* (Jn. 14:1). The emphasis on our “hearts” continues as Jesus implores: *“Believe into God, believe into me”* (Jn. 14:1)

Jesus’ intimacy with the nature of God as relationship inspired him to redefine the boundaries of family and tribe to which we all belong. Jesus extended kinship to everyone! Jesus tells us *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also”* (Jn. 14:6-7) ... *“Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father”* (Jn. 14: 12).

This seems extraordinary, that we as believers and followers of Jesus, have the power to do these and even greater works than Jesus performed! When we think of all the miracles that Jesus did. However, it is really a matter of believing with untroubled hearts that the power comes from God. Let us not underestimate the power of prayer at this time of distress in our world. Praying for those who put their lives at risk to protect others is a powerful means of dealing with troubled hearts!

As people who belong to *"the way"* and the Mercy family, we are invited to give this deep thought during our own prayer, meditation and contemplation time. We do not all have the same gifts and talents, but we can all exercise our gifts and talents for the healing and well-being of others.

Let's remember that, *"God has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion in this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world"* ~ Teresa of Avila.

Reflection:

- What word or phrase resonates with or challenges you?
- What sensations do you notice in your body?
- What is yours to do that may be different or challenging after your 'sheltering in place' time?
- How might you be animated, like Catherine McAuley and as a person of Mercy, to live your Jesus 'way' with those you 'shelter in place' with and those you work with?

Additional resources:

- Reflection on the Gospel - Easter 5A (John 14:1-14), by Veronica Lawson RSM
- Scripture: I Am with You on the Way, by Kathleen Rushton, April 30th, 2020. Tui Motu InterIslands Magazine 2020.
- A Community for All, Richard Rohr Meditation, May 6th, 2020. The Center for Action and Contemplation cac.org
- The Mystical Heart of Catherine McAuley, by Madeline Duckett RSM & Caroline Ong RSM, Reflection 9: Inner Peace, pp. 38 - 41

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(1) Madeline Duckett rsm & Caroline Ong rsm, *The Mystical Heart of Catherine McAuley*, p. 39, Published by the Sisters of Mercy, Melbourne Congregation, Australia. 2005.