



Lent Reflection for Thursday, March 9th

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Matthew 17:14-20

When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.' Jesus answered, 'You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.' And Jesus rebuked the demon,* and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' He said to them, 'Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'

Today's reflection is by Asa Swain

This reading really speaks to me because the father's fears don't seem that different than parent's fears today. I admit I don't have any children, but I occasionally attend Holy Apostles "This Little Light" services, and I enjoy seeing parents worship with their kids.

I feel for the father in this story. In times of need, I think we've all bargained with God once or twice. What parent wouldn't do anything to heal their child if they were sick? I can image the father first praying to God, then seeking out the disciples, and finally seeking our Jesus to heal their child. I can imagine his delight when his child is finally healed.

I am not a medical professional, but as a layman I feel like physical illness is a lot easier to understand than mental illness. We're lucky that a lot more physical illness can be cured today than in Jesus's time. But I think mental illness is something that still scares parents today. I just read that the CDC reported that teenage girls and queer teens report high rates of sadness and suicidal thoughts. If tried to draw a connection between the demons of Jesus's time and demons today, I think our demons are the addiction and depression many of us struggle with. Our society has so many problems, sometimes it can feel overwhelming.

I also find myself thinking about change. Honestly I'm not very good with dealing with change. Change (even the good kind) makes me anxious, I recently turned 40, and am at the age where I start feeling pretty set in my ways. So I'm struck by Jesus's admonition to his disciples about the power of faith. I feel like there are things in my life that cannot change, but Jesus tells me that if I had faith, I could move mountains. I'm reminded of that line from the Lord's Prayer "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done". I'm not asking God to magically fix my problems, but I think Jesus is reminding me that if I remember to have a little faith, God can show me the way. From little things, big things grow. Who knows what God has in store for us.

Asa Swain grew up in Newton, Massachusetts, and lives with his partner in Brooklyn. He's been attending Holy Apostles for several years, and enjoys singing in the choir. When he's not busy working, he enjoys spoiling his cat (who is living her best life), going hiking, playing board games, and reading science fiction novels.

