



Lent reflection for March 9, 2024

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1 Corinthians 10:1-13

I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did, as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” We must not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Today’s Reflection is by Ann Mellow

My first reaction to this passage was “Whoa!” Being struck down, idolatry, sexual immorality, being destroyed by serpents. Just a tad of hell fire there. But then, as I read it again, I was struck most by the last lines: “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is

faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”

“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone.” Common to everyone. How often have I felt alone in my own pain, thinking that no one else could possibly be feeling or experiencing what I am feeling and experiencing? When do we cry out, “God, why me?” Or why my loved one, or friend? But here we are reminded that we are all together in our human condition, in our temptations, our bad decisions, our “seemed like a good idea at the time” misjudgements. And perhaps most especially in the things outside of our control: the self-destructive behavior of a loved one, the onset of emotional and mental illness, the demons and addictions that we and those around us are subject to.

Yet here is what we as Christians believe, as we are reminded in today’s scripture: “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”

When I find myself alone in a spiritual or psychic wilderness, I have a tendency either to accept it as inevitable or think that I alone can find my way out. But here is a third way: that with God’s help, what 12-step programs call “Let go and let God” there is in fact a way out.

In her homily on Sunday, February 18, Mo. Sarah talked about how we get in our own way when it comes to connecting to God and being open to possibilities that we cannot even imagine. In these weeks of Lent, I am trying to be more aware when my own temptations, my need for control and making the world (or others) just as I want it to be, gets in the way of God’s grace.

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Ann Mellow has worshiped at Holy Apostles for six years. You can often find her recruiting folks for coffee hour! She and her husband, Peter, live in Ditmas Park.

