



Lent reflection for March 16, 2024

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Mark 9:14-29

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak, and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid, and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, help us! Have compassion on us!" Jesus said to him, "If you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."

Today's Reflection is by Stuart Matthewman

Reading this passage, I can easily visualize this hectic scene unfolding from all the characters point of view in their differing states of belief and faith; in Jesus, God, and even themselves.

For instance:

The crowd who are excited to see Jesus and want to believe and see for themselves what he can actually do.

The poor father- desperate to get Any help he can to finally heal his son.

The disciples- frustrated and embarrassed that they couldn't help

The skeptical group of Scribes who were non believers of Jesus and cynical of what this group of disciples could do.

The child completely helpless and reliant on everyone else but himself.

And then even Jesus himself, who seems to lose patience, perhaps even frustrated and disappointed, by the lack of faith by everyone around him.

As for the boy's father, Jesus is now his last hope, though he still has some doubts in his heart. Is it possible for Jesus to actually heal his son?

He says to Jesus "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us".

Jesus replies, "If You can, all things are possible for one who believes". The boy's father then says, "I believe, help my unbelief." There is so much truth, for most of us, in that one short sentence! .

For myself, I can identify at different times with everyone in this passage! I have situations, that although they are not as extreme as an incurable child, I just can't seem to figure out what to do or how to make the right choices in dealing with seemingly impossible problems or people/ This can leave me feeling helpless, frustrated and sometimes impatient with others around me – even loved ones who aren't even part of the problem!

In these times, I find comfort when I just stop, breathe and ask for help, quietly repeating the 'Surrender Novena' prayer,. "Oh Jesus I surrender myself to you, Take care of Everything" It feels like I am receiving calm and patient help and assistance from a friend or parent.

Obviously this doesn't mean giving up doing your own personal work, but with the faith that I am being looked after– as we say in the Lord's Prayer as well, "Thy will be done"

Jesus never said, "I'll Try to help". He just did it with confidence and faith in himself and His Father.



Stuart Matthewman is an import to Brooklyn from Yorkshire, England. He is a musician and music producer/composer, who now is trying his hand at singing in the choir as well as playing recorder in the church consort. He lives with his wife Syrie and four loony cats in Prospect Park South, and when its not too cold, he can be spotted annoying and scaring the locals, riding way too fast, wearing tight lycra on a bicycle in Prospect Park.