



Thoughts on the Journey...

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After gathering a few things from the seat of my car, I began my walk up the driveway. From the window in the front doorway I could see the

silhouette of her slight frame standing there waiting to greet me. This is a visit I always look forward to because of her glowing disposition and our thoughtful conversations. Mary Ann is one of our homebound parishioners who suffers from a number of health challenges that include residual effects from a stroke and severe rheumatoid arthritis.

The door opened and Mary Ann greeted me with all the warmth of a good friend. Slowly she turned her walker and began moving toward her suite. We settled in our chairs and as the light from the window highlighted her face, the cross of her suffering was fixed in her eyes.

“How are you doing?”, I asked her. With a strained smile, she answered honestly about feeling like a burden to her family, about the loneliness that comes with being physically limited, and the sometimes depression that accompanies relentless pain. Usually, Mary Ann is long on HOPE and short on discouragement but today, she seemed to need to talk aloud about the things she normally prays in silence. And there it is - that place that we all go to once in awhile where we need to put flesh on God. We need to sit in a room and look into someone’s eyes and see compassion, we need to speak and know that someone hears us, we need to peel the patches of darkness that creep in at times, so we can better see the light of Christ. It’s not a place of disbelief, quite the contrary, it’s a place of holding on, a place of wanting to get closer to God, a place of trying to better understand the meaning of suffering and it’s connection to Jesus. Her words captured my attention and once again I was in awe of Mary Ann’s faith. Before long our chat turned to family and we were laughing and celebrating the events and people in our lives.

In John’s gospel, Jesus and his disciples passed by a man who was blind from birth. The disciples presented the question to Jesus,

"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him."

Jesus healed the man of his blindness and you would think that the miracle itself would have made believers out of everyone who witnessed the healing. However, layers of distrust brought on by the question of ‘who’ Jesus was, created doubt and disbelief. The miracle was lost in the refusal to see Jesus who he was; they were blind to the very Messiah that walked among them - the very Messiah they awaited.

How reluctant are we today to recognize Jesus as our savior and the source of life and joy? Sometimes we become cynical and question God’s ability to heal and remedy the ills of this world. Sometimes we are blind to the unconditional love that flows freely to our hearts.

It is those people of faith who still believe in Jesus when they’re not healed from their earthly suffering that are the living miracles among us. Instead of losing sight of their faith, they continue to seek the Light of Christ in their lives. It is through their suffering with grace that God’s glory is revealed.

Healing comes in many forms and so do miracles. My friend Mary Ann is just one example of God working in the lives of his people. God’s goodness is around us in everything, even in someone’s suffering. I left my visit with Mary Ann giving thanks for her awe-inspiring faith. She was a poignant reminder to me of ‘who’ Jesus is and his saving power.