

REFLECTION

By **Gina Morgese**, Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries



"This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." - Acts of the Apostles 10:34A, 37-43

Today's first reading from Acts of the Apostles has deep and personal meaning for me; it reminds me that no matter how difficult the situation, God will never leave me. The words "this man God raised on the third day" reminded me of the miracle that God performed in my own life, when I was sixteen and found that I needed to have open heart surgery to repair a genetic heart defect that had gone undiagnosed since I was born. God performed a miracle in my life by protecting me for so many years. If someone asks me, "why do you believe in God," this is part of my witness story that I share. This reading also relates to my service experience. As part of my service year, I live in community with six other volunteers. Our community theme for this year has been "your brokenness is welcome here." We have it hanging on our living room wall as a reminder that God loves us despite our sinfulness, just as it is stated in the reading "everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name." This year, my community is focusing on how we need to remain humble and surrender our weakness to God, as it is only through Him that we can find strength.

Focus: COMMUNITY

As a Franciscan volunteer community, simple living is one of the main tenets of our year together. One such activity that we do as a community is to share simple meals together. We have a limited food budget and personal stipend and do not have extra money for fancy meals or eating out. Instead of eating out, we eat dinner as a community together at least four nights a week. This has been one of the best ways that we have been able to build friendships and a sense of a community, while upholding the pillar of simple living.

PRAYER

Dear Loving and Gracious God,

During this most sacred season, please help me to grow closer in my relationship with you as I focus on the ultimate sacrifice of your death on the cross. Help me to turn away from sinful habits and strive to better live out the Gospel teachings each day. I pray that I may spend these next days and weeks reflecting on the greatest act of love - your sacrifice on the cross - by simplifying my life and giving up things, habits or anything else in my life that distracts me from my relationship with You. In Your name I pray, Amen.

WHO INSPIRES YOU TO SERVE?

One person in my life who motivates and encourages me to serve others is Fr. Fred Nickle. He is the chaplain at the retreat center where I am currently serving. He is 80 years old and has been serving in youth ministry for over 20 years and works 6 days a week as a youth minister. Fr. Fred inspires me, because he has so much passion and energy to work with youth. Fr. Fred lets God's light shine through his thoughts, words, and actions. He has a such a gentle spirit and is the most giving and compassionate person I know.