

REFLECTION

By **Erin Dacosta**, Colorado Vincentian Volunteers

LENT 2020
Third Sunday

"Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst ." (JN 4:5-42)

In this story from the Gospel of John, Jesus is tired. How relatable, and completely human! Jesus is exhausted from the daunting work of His ministry: the travel, the chaos, and the constant commotion. He sits for a brief rest, seeking the aid of a Samaritan woman, an outcast of Jewish society. How dare Jesus socialize with her, let alone ask for her charity! This was against everything the Jewish people believed in, and yet, here Jesus was, tired and seeking aid from a Samaritan woman. And she acquiesces, aiding Jesus in His moment of need.

How often are we also tired from our ministries? In doing God's work, it is easy to become exhausted. Human emotions are complex; human interaction can make a spirit weary. Like Jesus, we are apt to give and give, but unlike Jesus, often forget (or refuse) to receive. Are we humble enough to ask for help when we need it? Are we willing to receive aid from the outcast and lowly of society, just as Jesus did from the Samaritan woman? What can we learn from those we might normally relegate as "other"?

Focus: SIMPLICITY

In reflecting on this passage, I am reminded of my year of service with the Colorado Vincentian Volunteers, during which I served at a daytime drop-in shelter for women and children experiencing homelessness. In my role as a Resource Advocate, I served these women day in and day out, providing meals, clothing, and countless other resources. As the year wore on though, these women provided so much more to me than I ever could have imagined. They were a listening ear as I discerned my post-service plans, a comforting presence when I was homesick, and a warm smile on a bad day. These women, who others might have labeled as outcasts, who had so very little to give, gave me so incredibly much during this transformative year.

Their lives were complex, and yet incredibly simple. Homeless, they had so little, yet so much. Out of necessity, they lived simply, and this enabled them to offer to the world what truly mattered. They taught me that simple living meant focusing on family, friends, and loved ones. It meant treasuring the small moments in life, and celebrating the big ones. I write this not to glorify homelessness, but to acknowledge the beautiful life lessons of simple living these women shared with me through their experiences. Their perspective changed my life, and nearly a decade later, I continue to reflect often on what these women taught me.

SERVICE SUGGESTION

Engage in the ministry of presence. Ask a local soup kitchen or shelter if you can visit with clients. Enjoy a meal or a cup of coffee with them, and simply engage them in conversation. Give the gift of time, and you might be surprised by what you can learn! Taking the time to pause is a gift, both to yourself and to others. If this feels too simple to you, ask the shelter/soup kitchen to stick around after the meal and help with clean up. They'll appreciate the help, you'll get to converse with clientele, and you'll be able to do some messy work too!

PRAYER

Loving God, help me to be unafraid to seek help when I need it. Building God's Kingdom is tough work, and I am up for the task, but also need help to know when to rest. Allow me the humility to be open to assistance from the most unlikely of sources as I continue Your work on this earth.

Open my eyes to those around me: the downtrodden, the outcast, and the poor, as we continue our journey and learning together.