

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 12th 2015

“Jesus summoned the twelve and he sent them off two by two . . .”

The work of God is not a solitary affair. This is very apparent from the first line of the gospel story today. But we also have other examples. In the Acts of the Apostles we hear about the journeys of Paul and Barnabas. And, although there were some lone prophets in the Old Testament, Moses had Aaron, Ruth had Naomi. Just to name a few.

I am lucky to have had many companions in my life. Today I would just like to share a little about my friend Marge. Marge and I met when our daughters were on the same softball team and in the same Girl Scout troop. We were told that the troop leader was stepping down the following year and that someone would need to step in. At church the following Sunday I was thinking about this and looked across and saw Marge sitting there and thought, “I would help her if she wanted to take over the troop.” I mentioned this to her at the next softball practice and Marge said that, coincidentally, she had had the same thought about me in church on Sunday. That day, a partnership was born.

Later that year, our parish was having a Christian Experience Weekend. I showed up on Friday night and was surprised to see that Marge there as well. We spent this weekend together exploring our faith and relationship with Jesus. Our bond to each other strengthening as well. A few weeks later I was asked to help out in a religious education class. Marge was the other teacher. This was 15-16 years ago. We have been in many faith sharing groups together, shared our joys and struggles since. Marge has a creative, crafty gift. She gives me courage to do things like cut down trees, work the kitchen on retreat and generally try new things. I think she would say that I encourage her to explore her relationship with God and in general get out of her box a little. We are the kind of friends who can pick up where we left off no matter how much time has passed since our last “lunch.” We pray with and for each other. When I was preparing to move she made me this beautiful picture of two swans on a lake with the caption “Life is a journey; take a friend with you.” Marge has shown me friendship, companionship and the face of Christ. Today’s gospel story reminds me to take time to be grateful for her friendship, companionship, ministry and prayer support.

Today, let us think about who the companions are/were in our lives. Who taught us faith? Who showed us our values? Who do we, or have we, ministered with? Who knows us better than we know ourselves? Who helps us know ourselves better? Who helps us to know God better? The work of God is not a solitary affair.

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