



The Gift of Faith

Our often fast-paced, frenetic lives get in the way of the north stars that should be guiding us. And trajectories change when, in the blink of an eye, we are blindsided. My family's blindside happened four years ago. On a Tuesday morning before work, my sister-in-law Jan was on a walk with the kid's five-month-old puppy Peter Paul. A young man speeding hit them head-on, killing them instantly.

Jan was married to my twin brother Jonathan, and they have twelve children, including ten adopted from Texas, Guatemala, Mexico, Russia, China, and Ethiopia. She was also a beloved breast cancer physician with a practice that served the underserved. Never afraid to love well, Jan was confident in her faith and marriage, leading her and Jonathan to adopt several older children with traumatic histories. They gave these children second chances believing they could thrive in a loving Christian family and a supportive community. Jan's ministry on earth informed our belief that gratitude increases with faith. She saw with her heart.

In today's reading, we find Bartimeus, a blind beggar with a deep faith in God living on society's margins. He cries out to Jesus as he's leaving Jericho, "Son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus asks, "what do you want from me?" and Bartimeus says, "Heal Me." Jesus heals him and says, "Go, your faith has made you well."

I find a parallel between Bartimeus' story and Jan's life. Bartimeus' miraculous healing happened because of his faith. He saw with his heart. And Jan, relying on her faith to help her overcome obstacles, inspired her family, friends, and patients to do the same."

Thomas Merton said, "Gratitude is the heart of the Christian life." May our faith continue to increase our gratitude so we, in turn, can live with seeing hearts.

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