

Companions IN PRAYER



St. Clare Sisters
Wheaton, IL

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Sr. Dianne is on the move again



Sr. Dianne is recovering very well from a total knee replacement last January. The surgery was originally scheduled for mid-April, but to her delight there was a cancellation at the beginning of the year. She was more than ready to proceed!

Now Sr. Dianne is without pain medication and doing physical therapy three times a week. She was comforted from the prayers and cards she has received. Thank you

WHEN THE VEIL DROPS

Have you ever perceived veils or curtains in your life? What happens when they drop?

After the passion and death of Jesus, the Gospel records that “the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” (Matt. 27:51, Lk. 23:46). Then an astonishing act of faith occurred when the centurion guarding Jesus exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!” (Matt. 27:54).

*Truly
this was
the Son
of God.*

When we experience new insights or spiritual understandings, some may say “the curtain parted for me.” In the Eastern religions they refer to the “removal of a thousand veils,” meaning the spiritual practice of uncovering hidden truths and achieving enlightenment by removing layers of ignorance or illusion. Uncovering hidden truths is embedded in the centurion’s spoken act of faith. His exclamation is a revelation to him and to all of us as a moment of enlightenment.

These moments can come at surprising times. After a friend’s death, we may reminisce about that person’s life as a whole and see how things worked together that were not so clear before. However, not all insights arrive at the end of life; they can appear after a very challenging experience.

For me, a serious car accident was one of these experiences. It was an ordinary day on a routine trip to the grocery store. To my surprise, a car T-boned the side of my vehicle. I remember turning to my right to see the front end of a car pushing into my car. Fortunately, an ambulance arrived and everyone was cared for as far as I know.

My recovery from broken bones took months to heal and more time in physical therapy. Basically, my world became very small. It was only as large as my arm could reach; otherwise, I was dependent on someone else for help.

During that time of confinement, I had lots of time alone. I wondered: Why me? Why now? What will I be after this? I didn't have answers to those questions, but I did become aware of my loss of confidence. A veil was removed and I saw how fragile I am. Every day I needed someone's help for basic care.

Even now after eight months, the sounds of the trucks emptying garbage cans make me jump. Or cars getting too close to me while driving or weaving in and out to get ahead. These actions did not disturb me before because I felt confident I could manage the situation.

With the dropping of a veil, I have experienced a reality that I didn't see before. I look back at all my driving years and wonder how many close calls I had that didn't happen. Today I see the power of these automobiles that we take so much for granted. Driving them can end our life or cause permanent physical damage to ourselves or someone else. It's a cautionary tale.

I have seen veils drop for other people as well. A cancer diagnosis can change everything one took for granted when life becomes radically different. The death of a loved one can alter our experience in the world because a veil of comfort and familiarity has been removed.

The removal of these veils is said to bring enlightenment and help us see the illusions in life. Sometimes. It makes me feel fragile because I feel insecure with my new understandings. I liked some of my illusions.

Yet, like a child with a toy, there comes a time when the toy no longer satisfies and something different is wanted. Something more real like truth. The dropping of these veils can reveal our real reason for being: we are journeying towards a fuller life.

The centurion's enlightenment after the death of Jesus most likely changed his life. How could he go on as before? I know my accident changed my life as I live in a new understanding. It has deepened my faith because I am forced to trust.

During this Lent I'm praying that other veils will fall to help me see more clearly. How about you?

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