

HOMILY 13TH SUN OT YRB 2018

I recently asked a number of people in the parish to write an account of a faith conversion experience that they had. I asked Sharon Miller to share her experience with you today. “Back in high school, I met a kind young man with a sense of humor, yet humble, and fell in love. I prayed that he be the one for me and at ages 22 and 23 we married. Our marriage was not perfect. We had our disagreements, financial struggles sleepless nights, stressful days, and family issues. One thing we had consistent is that we had the perfect God in our marriage. A God who is forever loving and forgiving and we lived by that same love and forgiveness. My faith was continuously growing.

After many years of marriage, my husband was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer at age 57. He had never been a smoker and the doctors could not tell us where the cancer came from. The following two years were filled with long hospital stays, consulting doctors across the country, researching new cancer treatments and worry. I could not bear to see my loved one suffer and was frustrated that I did not know how to help him. And so I would pray to Jesus.

My prayers to Jesus were answered. Not in a miracle cure that I had hoped, but in a reassurance that we were in good hands. I kept getting this feeling that Jesus is with us and He was not leaving us alone. I knew that I needed to totally believe and trust Him and it was then that I allowed Jesus to take over. It was at this time that my faith soared to a higher level. And I thought, our God who so masterfully created us must surely have an even greater plan for us in the next life with Him in heaven. It was easy letting go but it was more comforting knowing Jesus was by our side guiding and taking care of my loved one.

I thank God for the gift of my husband. I now put my life totally in God’s hands and allow Him to open doors of opportunity for me. I pray daily that the Holy Spirit allow me to

choose my thoughts, words, and actions so that I may never miss an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life and I ask for forgiveness when I miss that opportunity."

In the Gospel reading today, we hear an account of two healings. One of these involved a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. She spent all of her resources looking for a cure. She wanted to be cured, and after 12 years she finally turned to Jesus as a last resort. She reached out and touched him and her faith saved her. She was cured. My question that I had when I was reading this account was: "Why did you wait 12 years?" Now maybe this was the first opportunity she had to touch Jesus, but if she was a Jewish woman of faith in God, why did she not turn to God before 12 years. The other healing involved the daughter of Jairus, a synagogue official. He waited until his daughter was at the point of death before he turned to Jesus. Again, why did he wait so long? He was a synagogue official, so I am assuming he was a man of faith. Why did he wait so long? I think we do this sometimes. We exhaust every other option, and as a last resort we turn to Jesus. Why do we wait so long? I have talked to multiple people lately who tell me that they feel selfish asking God for things for themselves, like they don't want to bother God. God loves us unconditionally all the time and want to be in an ongoing relationship with us. Why do we shut Him out of our lives and only turn to him in times of desperation.

Sharon kept Jesus in her life and marriage every day. She did not have the perfect marriage, but my guess is she kept asking for Gods help in getting through the rough spots. I think keeping a marriage together is really hard. Having a close relationship is hard and we have to work at it all of the time. When we talk about bringing God into our marriages, our relationships that is what it means. Asking for God's help all of the time. God wants to care for us, but we have to let Him. And when Sharon's husband was diagnosed with stage four lung

cancer and had never smoked. How unfair was that. She could have gotten stuck there in anger, and I am sure she had her moments, but she let God care for her and she was able to move forward. And she prayed for a cure, but it did not happen. I am sure she had her moments, but she did not get stuck there either. We all know that we are not going to live forever. All married couples. You have a 50/50 chance of being the one who is left. Very few married couples die at the same time. This is true of all of our relationships. We know intellectually that this is part of the circle of life. Death is just a transition to eternal life. It is not the end, but the beginning of new life. It was painful for this woman to watch her husband suffer and decline. And I am sure that she suffered greatly as she grieved the loss of her husband, but this is the price we pay for the gift of love. And our faith tells us that we are only separated for a very short time. We will be together again in eternal life. But since she kept God in her life, God cared for her. He helped her through all of the pain and suffering. And because she asked for Gods help she was able to go on living and continues to be able to go on living. Her life did not unfold exactly as she had planned, had wanted, but God gave her what she needed to continue to live through all of the ups and downs.

God wants very much to be in relationship with each one of us. He loves us unconditionally all of the time and wants to care for us. Don't turn to God only as a last resort. He should be the first person that you turn to.