

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year A

***1 Samuel 16:7. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.***



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As a young person half-way through college God called me very profoundly on a retreat. It's very difficult to get confused when you are hearing "Choose the straight path" or "Seek me with all your heart." I was being torn apart in my pharmacy classes. I so hoped someday to serve God with my whole self, and I couldn't see it with the path I was on. The straight path seemed to mean giving up the degree and becoming a nun, and yet that scared me to death. That life didn't seem to be anything I could do, but still there was this inner call.

I had a good inter-denominational prayer group that I belonged to. They had a wonderful prayer life. The call continued and I went home to my mom and told her about all of this. She told me, "You can serve God in many ways. You don't have to become a nun."

I had to find out who I was. I accomplished a very difficult goal of graduating from pharmacy school. I found a lot of friends and was thankful for choosing the Catholic church at a very confusing time. I felt very strongly that the Church was too old and too wonderful and too rich to walk away from. If there were things that needed to be changed I wanted to help that change come about. I understood that at twenty-three years old. What an awesome gift at that age!

I came to Davison to work at a job that didn't pay very much – it was where I had done my summer work all through college – and it was close to home, only forty miles from all the people that mattered. In the midst of a low-paying job I found that this was a place that treated people well, that looked people in the eye, that people made friends, and I found myself very happy doing that work.

I went to St. John's. My mom told me that the people there were well-known for pushing the envelope and being different than other Catholic Churches. The pastor, Fr. Wakefield, directed me toward John Cameron, the youth minister. So, I began teaching seventh grade, met Dan at the first meeting and was not impressed! We would end up at John's house after teaching classes. John had known Dan for a year and he wanted him to meet someone special. He decided I could be that person for Dan.

We knew each other for about four months before we decided to start dating – we watched the Super Bowl together. It took me about four months to size this man up: a man with a college education who loved the church, was well-liked, a quiet man who was liked by my parents and enjoyed spending time with my family.

I'd asked God for a number of things and, looking back, once I just started looking at Dan for who he was, I see that I married my best friend. There were the little things. I had worked on the farm and had big hands. I needed someone whose hands were larger than mine – someone who could pull me up when I was down. We've been married for 27 years and there have been many times that he's held me up. He loves me for who I am and has never thought I should be anybody different, even when I've failed, even when I've made mistakes. In raising our kids he's had it together. He is calm and strong and so often the kids look to him for peace in their lives. What a gift God gave me.

So, *“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.”* Hebrews 11:1. My marriage is the realization of things hoped for. I'm so blessed. God gave me the ability to see into Dan's heart. There are things that he told me about myself that I didn't believe because my self-esteem wasn't high enough. Through college and beyond I keep trying to affirm myself – my need to be in the world. It's hard to affirm that you are needed in the world. God created us for something. We have a purpose.

In my mind there is no straight path, it is a complete circle. It is complete when I find that piece that makes it complete. I know now that God made me perfect for our marriage and for our life together.

I was not complete in my search for how to serve God until the blessing of the Sienna Heights classes. It began with Dan's “yes” to the Deaconate. Dan knew he had to pursue his love of the sciences and math, so his “yes” to the Deaconate was for him a sense that God had called him to marriage and the Deaconate. I wanted to go to those classes with him, but I worked every Saturday so that was impossible.

I know now that the full circle is not complete. I still don't know where I'm being called to, but I know the path. I'm not going to experience the full circle until I'm standing at the table with the Lord in heaven. But this point of understanding my faith and God's call in my life assures me that I will be called to that table. This is a gift I want to sing about! No matter what this life hands out, I know where I'll be someday. There is no doubt. I don't wonder how it will happen. I just let God take care of that. God is in charge. Having faith is realizing what is hoped for. I have evidence in my life of what is not seen.

It's my marriage, it's my understanding of God leading me to His table. Being commissioned as a lay minister helped me realize that it is enough to be a pharmacist. I'm being called to serve right where I am. If I can help anybody, my strongest sense of God is that you are doing the will of God as long as there is love in your heart, with a desire to serve. You don't have to recreate yourself to be good for God. God made you

exactly the way you are, exactly the way he wants you to be. He gave me enough intelligence to handle my job and the ability to relate to the average person.

You don't have to be poor to serve God. You only need enough to take care of your family. Use the rest for what is needed for the community. You have to be able to give up the excess. My poverty began when I had to let my children go. Although we raise our children to see them grow to be happy and self-sufficient, it is difficult to see them grow and do well, and then leave us to make their own lives. Indeed, we are rich because we have played a part in this taking place, but it is difficult to give them up! It's grace. It's the full circle. Eventually they will look back to see where their mistakes turned into grace.

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