



A weekly reflection by members of the Precious Blood Community

April 10, 2024

Sr. Paul Gero, C.P.P.S.

A Eucharist Story

Her name was Mary K. Jackson. She was a professional Girl Scout—yes, there have to be people paid to administer the organization. She occasionally moved from one Girl Scout Council to another as need and opportunity arose. She worked for a time in my hometown, where she got to know my family, and later moved to a place near where I was teaching and got to know me. She wasn't a Catholic, or indeed any denomination. When she came to a new town, she would look for the Christian church that seemed to be “doing the most to help the poor” and join it.

She had a huge circle of friends. I was amazed that she knew Muslims and Jews, people of all different colors, democrats, republicans, militants, pacifists, poor people, influential people...this was way beyond my experience at the time. I said something to her about it once, and she responded that some of them were impressed that she knew a Roman Catholic nun. Um, yeah.

She never carried a picket sign outside an abortion clinic. She just invited, on at least two occasions, a pregnant girl to stay with her until she had given birth and was back on her feet. She once noticed a mother and children at a McDonald's crying over a meager meal. Most people would have been reluctant to pry; Mary K. pried. The family had been abandoned in a strange town with no money and no way to get home. They were made welcome in Mary K.'s apartment until their situation was resolved.

In a way, this is the least important thing: Mary K. was severely handicapped. Like the woman in Luke 13, she was bent and unable to stand erect. Marfan syndrome* had twisted and collapsed her spine, deformed her face, and subjected her to constant and sometimes acute pain. Her car had to be equipped with a series of mirrors; she could not turn her head. Once, to my regret, I clumsily jostled her. She had to use crutches for days. We remained friends.

Why is this a Eucharist story? I believe that when a person is so much an image of Christ, and gives herself so completely to those she meets, that she is Eucharist to them. Saints are Eucharist to their people in their own times and places. You know some. You've received Eucharist from them. You hope, as I hope, to be Eucharist too.

*Marfan syndrome is a congenital defect of the connective tissues of the body. Life is shortened. It is not less important.

Sr. Paula Gero, C.P.P.S, has been a vowed member of the community for over sixty years. She has served the community in many ministries, including tutoring children recently.

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This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org