

What's Your Story?

HOMILY SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2007 - Deacon Colleen

Stories... stories. Each Sunday when we come to church we hear stories. We hear stories from the Old Testament and then the New Testament, and then we hear the stories of Jesus from the Gospels. Now some would say that these are old stories, who needs them, what do they have to do with our life today anyway? My 13 year old son Rob says the Bible is outdated, certainly why do we waste our time on the Old Testament? is that a copout, a reason not to read the Bible, it's just an outdated book, not relating to anything we need to know today.

In fact, in Paul's reading today he implores us to "share effectively" our experiences of faith and our stories that might bind us together as people of faith, so that the kingdom may grow and we might become a stronger community.

In that vein I have decided to share a story of mine, not in an effort to gain your pity, but in an effort to share one person's faith and to connect with your faith story, because we all have a story to share, there are not just a few stories here in this building today, but there are stories in each of you, stories that

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tell of faith and hope and commitment to your God. Could it be we are, each and every one of us a walking story?

And so I have decided to share my story with you today, with the help of the McAuley family who graciously agreed to illustrate my story into a type of a book so that it may live on. So Rachel will read the story and Megan and Sara Brynn will help their mom share the illustration of the story that will be shared today.

(Story read by Rachel)

THE STORY OF THE REALLY COOL DEACON IN THE REALLY COOL CHURCH IN THE REALLY COOL TOWN

Once upon a time there was a really cool deacon who worked at a really cool church in a really cool town. Now this really cool deacon loved her work at her really cool church in the really cool town. She was very busy doing all sorts of stuff. The people at her really cool church loved her, and she was pretty happy there.

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One day God came to visit the really cool deacon at the really cool church in the really cool town and said, "Hi really cool deacon". "Hey God", said the really cool deacon. "What's goin on?"

"Well," said God to the really cool deacon at the really cool church in the really cool town, "I came to ask you if you would come down this road over here with me."

The really cool deacon from the really cool church in the really cool town looked over at the road God had pointed to and frowned.

"But that road looks dark, God. Why would you want me to come down that road? You must see how busy I am here doing all this good work in this really cool church in this really cool town. Can't you ask somebody else to go? Can't you see how important I am here? Who will do this work if I don't?"

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And God said, "Well, really cool deacon from the really cool church in the really cool town, up to now your journey might be said to be all about your faith in me. Are you willing to go down a road that might be about my faith in you?"

"Well, now that you put it that way, God," said the really cool deacon, "that sounds adventurous, but where is the light, God, the path looks dark from here."

"It does look dark, and it may be dark at times, really cool deacon, but I give you my word that if you hold my hand I will be with you through any darkness, I will light the path one footstep at a time. So, will you trust me, really cool deacon?"

And so the really cool deacon took the hand of God and started down the unknown path.

And it WAS DARK... and it was SCARY...

And there was PAIN... lots of PAIN...

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And there were lots of CLOUDS, sometimes very very scary

DARK CLOUDS...

And sometime the really cool deacon from the really cool church in the really cool town was very afraid.

And just when the really cool deacon felt isolated from her God, just when the pain seemed to surround her, when for the first time in her life she felt unable to pray to her God, just when she felt God had let go of her hand...

God sent angels..

God sent sisters and brothers, and moms and dads, aides, and nurses and therapists, and doctors and case managers, and prayer partners and reiki masters, and deacons and priests and bishops, and lots and lots of friends who loved the really cool deacon.

And with the help of all these angels the really cool deacon from the really cool church in the really cool town was able to

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go down the strange dark road, confident that God would disclose the gifts of the clouds that surrounded her. And he did...

And the really cool deacon from the really cool church in the really cool town was changed in ways she never would have imagined, and it was ALL GOOD.

And so the really cool deacon returned to her really cool church in the really cool town a new person, and she lived almost happily ever after.

My story is no different than many of yours. You have all experienced roads in your life that presented you with choices of darkness or light, pain and uncertainty , and for one reason or many reasons you chose one road over the other.

I am here to tell you that when we feel distanced from God it is we who have moved. I have a very old dear friend, Bob Alexander, one of the first people I met when I first visited St.

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Barts in the 70s, when I would tell him that I felt far from God and isolated, he would boldly ask me, “well, who do you think moved?”

I have come to learn and experience all these years later that it is we who move, God never leaves us, and he is always near. Even when we can't feel his presence, he sends angels in the form of folk we recognize, maybe later after the event happens, but if you were to look back at a time when you felt God had left you to handle a difficult or painful time for yourself, I wonder if you really re-examined that time if you would see angels sent by God to be there for you?

The truth is that God is never far. In scripture we hear that darkness and light are both the same to God, and so it is with God's faithfulness in us.

As you leave today you will see a basket of small notebooks. Help yourself to one and when you have time, think back to a story in your life, when you felt God's presence

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or absence, whatever it was, and document it, write it down, and make it more real by owning the words.

Look back and see who moved, where was God, what was the condition of your faith, how are you different, what do you remember about God's faith in you.

My sisters and brothers, if our faith isn't in God then where is it anyway? Remember how our mothers always said always wear clean underwear in case you end up in the emergency ward? Well, why do we put on clean underwear and come together in this beautiful building when there are so many other things we could be doing? What is it that pulls us to this place? Could it be the stories that make us a community, could it be the stories that help connect us together as a family of faith believers?. If it's not about our faith in a God and His faith in us, then why are we here in the first place? Why do we bother?

Amen.