Columns
Horizons
Spirituality



Mercy Sr. Kelly Williams pulls a statue of the Virgin Mary out from her hair during a "Saturday Sister Surprises" video. (Courtesy of Kelly Williams)



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"Jesus stood up and exclaimed" (John 7:37). I'll get back to this, I promise!

How do we exclaim the joy of the Gospel in our day-to-day lives? How do we share the wonder of God's love poured out on the Cross? How do we relish in the mystery of Trinity at work in the world?

As I was going over the readings for Pentecost, I saw the word "or" three times. Four options for the first reading! Four pretty strong vibes offered to ignite the imagination.

I love when there are options for readings. I always find it interesting to read both. Whichever one is chosen leads you down a particular path, and Pentecost is a time to recognize the many paths that are available to us to share what God is asking us to do.

Maybe it is a time to look inward to the gifts we are cultivating, or notice the gifts we are hesitant to share. Perhaps it is also time to look around us and encourage our community members, friends, family and co-workers to embrace and cultivate their gifts.

I am blessed to have a number of friends who are incredible writers, who feel compelled to share through the written word. (Despite these particular words you see written, writing is not my go-to. Here we are, all the same.) It is a treasure for me to see my friend's writing and see the fire within them alight when they find the words they need to craft the message.

I love my friends who are teachers, who light up as they talk about their students and the progress they make. Even in sharing some of the woes, their love flows through them.

My friends who work in social justice are sparks of energy who are willing to do whatever it takes to raise up the voices of the marginalized and spur people into action.

And then there are those of us who are figuring it out and trying on many hats in an attempt to find one that fits. And sometimes delighting that none of them do, so we have an opportunity to keep trying!

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The call of the Gospel invites us all. We are called to share the good news. How does that look for each of us? Will we write an article or a book? Will we preach from a pulpit or a cellphone? Will we paint the ceiling of a church or sketch an image of the Sacred Heart on a napkin in a coffee shop? Will we stop in our tracks when given the opportunity to share? Will we say yes to the invitation?

And just as a reminder, know that we do not have to do it all. We don't have to write the article *and* the book, preach *and* be an expert at silence, paint *and* sew, and and and. We can look at the beauty of "or."

We can also embrace cultivating a gift for a season, and letting it go at the end of that season of time. We can see other's gifts and encourage them. We can look at things from a different lens or angle and allow the wonder of the Spirit to help us find a new way of sharing God's love!

Many years ago, when I was in my first job out of college, I traveled a lot for work and I found myself in many airports. While traveling, I had an interesting thing happen, which was that my hair was searched at TSA lines almost every other time that I flew. I never had anything in my hair, but my hair is just thick, I guess. I always wondered what might happen if I might have had something in my hair though!

So, in 2020 in the midst of lockdowns, I was looking for a way to share some of God's joy, which we all know can be silly, too. So I made a video and called it "Saturday Sister Surprises." Each Saturday, I do indeed find something in my hair and pull it out to display it! It's been a way for me to share about my faith in some of the physical symbols of my faith. It might be a rosary, a prayer book, or a statue or two.

After a few months, I figured perhaps it was time to let go, and I received a message from a friend letting me know what a challenging week it had been for them, but that they looked forward to the videos. And so I continued.

It's been a way for me to connect with my community — they offer ideas and quite often lend a hand filming — and it has helped me look for joy each and every week!

And in this silly sharing, I took an experience that was not especially comfortable and gave it new life. I get to share my gifts that I have cultivated and been

encouraged in sharing. And through these silly videos, I have been given opportunities to share about God's love and desires for us.

We will never know the extent to which God reaches people through us. Maybe it is through our exclamations that sound loud or through our prayer that seems quiet. God remains working through us.

Let us join with Jesus and exclaim in the way we are being invited to at this moment!