Columns
Spirituality



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by Grace Marie Del Priore

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On a recent retreat, I came across an image of faith that stayed with me. It described the life of a believer in terms of a sojourn on a sailboat. Faith is both an anchor and a sail, grounding us and moving us for the same reason: the Gospel. My faith empowers me to take a firm stance and to move beyond what I think is possible while also serving as a source of security and great adventure.

First, I was anchored. Through the sacraments, I became a daughter of God and member of the church.

As I grew older, I developed a personal relationship with God and a prayer life that grounded me in what really matters. Knowing what's worth my time and energy helps me make meaningful choices. It's satisfying to live a life of purpose, led by Gospel values rather than wayward secular ideas.

Being anchored keeps me centered and gives me spiritual joy. When I'm not intentionally anchoring myself in the Gospel, it's easy to drift, like a boat moved by the current. When that happens, my faith acts as oars that push against the pressures of this world.

It can be difficult to do this, to be countercultural in our society. Fortunately, a little faith goes a long way! Jesus promises, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

No matter where the winds carry me, God is always with me because he is a God of possibilities. My faith becomes a sail that, filled with the Holy Spirit, carries me to distant shores.

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I used to live by secular values, and a big part of my conversion involved recognizing how limiting they are. I was once ambitious to be recognized for my gifts and talents, but once I began prioritizing service to others and contributing in community, I found deeper fulfillment.

I also learned to seek wisdom, instead of intellectualism or worldly knowledge. I've been moving from my head to my heart and realized that God's possibilities are truly

those of the heart! Faith opens me up to be in relationship and service with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Another aspect of faith that inspires me is hope. It creates so much potential, since God's goodness makes anything possible. It's stronger than anything that can go wrong. As a believer, I trust that situations and people can turn out better. Hope moves me forward!

The Holy Spirit enkindles a bold faith within me, too. This one was trickier; there are definitely times that I'm more comfortable being anchored in faith than riding its sails. Lately, though, I've been growing in a boldness that is more authentic.

Through reflection and prayer, I've tried to draw close to God while he draws close to me. In that experience of the indwelling, to hear both his voice and my own. I've begun to share with more authenticity and openness, to say what I've hesitated to say out loud before. It's brought me an inner freedom that has taken me in some promising directions.

Faith is both anchor and sail for me; it centers and frees me. It keeps me steady and moves me forward. When I am centered on Jesus and the Gospel, there's no limit to what I can do with God's help!