

Solitude, Courage and Community



It is creative people who have an impact on society. Researchers have found three common needs for people to move ahead in effective ways:

- **solitude**
- **courage**
- **community**

Solitude

Notice in the Resurrection story that Mary Magdalene was alone in the garden; the other disciples had run back to tell their friends. In her solitude, Mary found the Lord. Or rather, He could speak to her and be heard by her. This reading doesn't rush that encounter between Mary and the Risen Lord. Their time together could have gone on for a while until finally Jesus told Mary that she had to go, move forward, and carry His message to others, and ultimately to us today. That time of solitude, full of communion with Jesus, gave Mary her direction. Courage filled her heart as she returned to her small community and announced, "I have seen the Lord!"

Jesus often went into the mountains to pray, and to be alone. He called His apostles to come away with Him, to escape the madding crowd, and spend time together, building their relationships with Him, so they could continue His work on earth.

Artists, writers and poets all have to get away quietly in order to hear the voice within, in order to produce their masterpieces. League members need that too! They need to turn off the noise of radios, televisions and people, and go into their quiet places to spend time with God. To just BE together, listen to Him speak to their hearts, and refresh themselves in His presence. Perhaps League members can learn a few things from the monks. For centuries they have existed and still attract followers. In their daily routine, they provide a structure - a schedule within which their members practice solitude regularly.

Everyone could benefit from the kind of solitude the monks carry out - manual labour in silence for a good chunk of time, regularly. Milk cows, make cheese, iron,

garden, wash floors, walk, swim, rock babies, ride a bike - but done alone, in the company of Jesus. And done often; at least once a week. It should be planned as if it was a date with God or a bridge game.

Listen to the solitude. May Sarton stated, "Solitude cracks open the inner world." The secrets of the soul can be explored and given form when allowed the gift of solitude. It is in these times of quiet when it is possible to hear the Lord's voice - ideas will bubble up, plans will begin, truths become real, and lights will go on—as with Mary Magdalene and the apostles. Pay attention! These ideas, these words, these truths are God's way of using His followers to reach out to others and to shape the future. "Go," He says, "I will be with you always. Fear not."

Solitude gives courage

Courage and the word "can" are tied together. They are like gas in a car; they give it power to move ahead. It has never been easy to be a courageous, creative person, to be a visionary, to be a person of faith concerned for the future or to be on the front lines.

- look at the poverty of many of the great artists and writers
- look at Jesus and His followers
- look at the saints
- look at the missionaries who brave martyrdom even in modern times

Courageous, creative people are different. They are often misunderstood; they pose a threat to the status quo, and they speak the truth. The creative ones are often outsiders; they are restless. They are forever unsatisfied with the mundane, the apathetic, and the conventional. They are filled with a passion and drive that is compelling. Solitude brings the assurance that God is with us, which brings the courage to step out in faith. Now what?

Community

For centuries, women have met in tents, front parlours, town halls, and church basements. These partnerships have been and remain the way to impact society. The small community empowers, gives courage, plans and contributes talent to the ideas of the people. The process of prayer, issue, strategy in community, courage and moving forward in faith works! This mirrors the League's

Letters to the Editor

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resolutions process. Members act with respect and offer a win-win solution. Members show society that justice is the right way to go.

Solitude, courage and community are cyclical

- solitude produces courage
- courage draws us into community
- community shows us the need for solitude

Members are continually invited into this creative relationship with God. It is a trinitarian relationship too:

- in solitude, members meet the Father
- with courage, members encounter Jesus
- in community, members are filled with the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of Your faithful; kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your spirit and they shall be created and You will renew the face of the earth!

Betty Anne Brown has been a life member in national council since 1993. She lives in Wellington, Ontario. Presently, she is out in the fields alone, courageously tending her small vineyard in the hopes of a future harvest for the family to enjoy!



It gives me such great pleasure to let you know just how fantastic your new format for the Catholic Women's League magazine is. I honestly could not put it down. The phone has been ringing constantly and the ladies are really excited about this edition. This is the first time in all of my years as a member that some say, "I read every page." That is such a compliment to all of you that I felt I should share it immediately. We saw the photo and article by Ann Doucet, National Chairperson of the Education and Health Standing Committee and a life member. This article on honey has really set us a "buzz."

The Guaranteed Income Supplement is certainly a boost in the right direction. I must thank you as well for giving a photo of National Past President Vivian Bosch. Vivian will be coming to our area the end of the month and now I feel as if I know her. Just wonderful. The colors seem to make the magazine a "happy magazine."

Each and every article is just great. To all of you I say congratulations. Keep up the good work. I am proud to say I belong.

Frances (Bobbie) Cross

*Communications and Public Relations
Saint John Diocesan Chairperson*

Dear Editor,

In the Canadian League, Volume 80, Winter 2004 Issue, page 4 there is a "Woman's Peace Prayer." In the first line is "Creator of all." I know that God is Creator. In the first line of third verse is "O Nurturing Spirit." Who or what is that? Has, or is this magazine, becoming New Age? What is wrong with "God" or "Holy Spirit" or are we into political correctness in a magazine that should be in the fullness of truth?

On page 20, in the first paragraph Vivian Bosch writes "God's spirit," and "the spirit of God." Why small s on "spirit" and why not Holy Spirit? Are we being dumbed down on same problem as above.

Page 26 states "Letters to the Editor are gratefully received." But are they printed is the question?

I am losing faith in the Catholicity of this periodical.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Hermanson

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