

SILENT LIFE, HOLY LIFE

By

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As I was on the way to the store with yet one more busy shopping treasure hunt for Christmas, I passed by a group of obviously challenged autistic mentally challenged people, somewhere in their 40's and 50's waiting for a bus pick up from their workshops for the day. They had coolers, and lunch bags, and were sitting there conversing, staring, rocking and waiting.

I thought of their patience. I thought of all the times they wish they could form the words to say what they needed, wanted, or hoped for. I prayed for their comfort on this obviously cold day. It was then that I looked in the mirror in my own car. My 24 year old autistic son was sitting in my car, safe, secure, knowing he had a family that loved him. I thought of others who had parents who had to give their children to institutions and group homes, because the load and stress were too hard to bare. One day, my son will join these people when I die. I started to tear up and think about how life was, and is so hard for people with challenges. I thought of my daughter who has higher functioning autism, and how she was more aware of how different she was, and still needs supports.

Why do the meek and the lowly seem to suffer so much on this earth? It really doesn't have to be that way. It's like a giant brick wall between them and us. What makes us so special? We make wars, we make contentions, we hate each other obviously, we don't tolerate each other, we scoff at the weak, and the lowly, and challenged. We don't make things better, we don't inclusively put each other on the same page, as these group of adults do so easily? We don't know how to make peace, we don't know how to get along, we don't know how to wait, and be patient. All we do is talk too much and do too little.

What do these people do? They support one another, without even the words to say it. They clap for each other when they make a basket in the ring. They stand by you in the cold. If they're angry it doesn't come from a place of malice, it comes from a place of physical pain. They don't care how challenged you are. They wait for your love and don't expect anything from you. They take life as it comes, slowly, and sometimes deeply. Caught in the world of autism, they seek for understanding of what planet they have laid themselves upon. When senses don't make sense, and words don't make sense. They love to have love, they seek for approval when in reality, they don't even need approval. They love routines, predictability, something to count on.

Later, when I got to the store, after shopping for our Christmas dinner, I thought about what Christmas they would have? Would they have someone to go home too? Would they have someone to love them? I got my food treasures in my basket and proceeded out to the rainy cold day before Christmas. My son didn't look too well in the store, I

could tell these things, mother's have 6 eyes. He started to have another ataxic moment, he couldn't take it anymore. He had to sit down....on the cold wet pavement of the parking lott, grease and all. I tried to pick him up, but he is a young man and I am a weakling. People started to gather, as if my son was the lion in the zoo-an attraction for the day. They didn't come to me, they just observed. They did more than that however. They judged. Why doesn't this child get off the pavement? I am sure that was there first thought. I tried again, and to no avail as I told my son to scoot his bottom to the car, wet greasy pavement and all. Cars were waiting to get into my stall, but they had to be patient. It takes time to get through these things.

I guess what I am trying to say, is though there lives are silent, they are also holy. They have blessed me, beyond measure. I don't think about how this looks, or that looks, I don't care anymore! I do the best I can, and so do my children. If that isn't good enough, well, that's all I can do. I hope we can reflect upon our children's silent, yet holy lives. They are our teachers. They will teach, even when we don't want to be taught. May the blessing of an infinite and divine Son, make your journey a better one...knowing that in his life, he too sacrificed, was scoffed and scorned. He didn't think about what others thought of him, he did his Father's business, and just did it anyways. He was inclusive. He loved everyone, even the sinner. He was a healer, a peacemaker, someone of whom is also reflected in our children. I am sure Mary pondered all these things in her heart, and knew that she was a chosen mother. May we also think of ourselves, on some levels, as Mary of old. Though we do not know the future as she did, and the pain and sorrow that would ensue in his life, she also knew of the infinite sacrifice He would make, to save her, to save you. Perhaps at times, our children really do save us from ourselves?

Silent life, holy life, all is calm, all is bright. Tender and mild are our children. Sleep in heavenly peace, knowing, that your child is a teacher to our world. Let their lives so shine. Let their suffering end. Let those who assume the worse of the disabled, assume the best, and assume a position of being taught by one who has been given a challenge for which they could never endure. By that time, and that realization, one will come to a conclusion that THEY are the better human being.