

God Catches Us Gently

In the time leading up to Sr. Therese's death, she decided she wanted to throw a party. It was at the party, as we sat at a table in the Bethany Retreat Center dining room, we were remembering building the Youth Center, the huge mortgage and how no one had any idea how it would all work out. And yet it did. We talked of miracles and God's spirit always at work in the day-in, day-out happenings at Bethany. I said, "Sr. Therese, in all these stories God always let this place get right to the edge of the cliff and then sends you what you need just before you fall off the cliff". I remember her reply like it was yesterday. She said "No, no dear heart. God waits until we are in freefall and just about to go splat. Then he puts out his hand and gently catches us".

This story has been a touchstone to return to frequently on my own spiritual journey. I love this story because it shines light on how to live completely in God's will, not without fear, but in spite of the fear. Sr. Therese had complete and utter trust that God's hand would always guide/catch/save us. And she knew the utter dread of the free fall. God doesn't necessarily make it easy. God makes it exactly the way God wants things to come out – as long as it takes, and as circuitous a route as God wants to take, as easy or as perilous as God chooses. Sr. Therese taught me that living in God's will, and turning it all over to the Holy Spirit makes room for God to do sovereign things. These things never happen in the simple, straightforward way I hope and expect. Instead they happen in the exact way that God chooses for them to come about, loving us totally at every step of the journey, and even more so when it is perilous, and we are in free-fall.