



Lenten

Reflection Series

One Church, Many Voices

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Ash Wednesday - February 17

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I love being Catholic. It has been my identity since even before my birth. I am sure that my grandmothers and family said many rosaries even before I took my first breath. In Chicago where I grew up, you knew someone not by their neighborhood but by their parish. I am from St. Mary of the Woods, a church and school of Divine Revelation. Being Catholic wasn't only about prayer, it was who we were in the deepest part of ourselves whether we were at mass, in class or competing on the basketball court.

During my grade school years, I always enjoyed the irony as we prepared for our basketball or football games against our main rival. Both teams prayed to Our Lady of Victory, although we knew that Our Lady preferred St. Mary of the Woods over Queen of All Saints.

Knowing we were Catholic always meant that we knew that God was present in every moment of our lives whether learning, fighting or praying. Knowing that meant that ultimately every moment became sacramental. Through faith, every moment becomes transformed from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

I have always loved praying in different churches, hearing different languages and the symphony of different voices but one faith and one creed. I have loved praying in our Italian, Hungarian, Polish, Greek and English speaking churches. I love praying with my cousins in Ireland and at a sunset liturgy with farm workers. I loved praying at home with my family as we held my father's hand before he died.

I hope this Lent that we can learn to listen and love the different voices we hear in our faith community. I hope that we can remember what has given us real joy in our Church, and I hope that we can see God present even when we fight, disagree or compete. When we do, we all may see, as I do every day, that in every moment we are part of an extraordinary, sacramental world. Our Lady of Victory, Pray For Us.