

St. Katherine

All Saint's Day reminds us of faithful ones who went before us and made a way for our faithfulness. I celebrated this feast of gratitude for saints in heaven with saints on earth, both Catholic and evangelical, at our East Coast Training in Pennsylvania last week.

I was most grateful for an obscure saint but one radiant to me, Katherine Allen. She was catapulted into eternity after a fiery head-on car collision in 2014. To be honest, I hadn't thought of her much recently. Until that training. 16 persons for whom she had given her life to reveal Jesus gathered with us and their stories moved me deeply. Around the Tidewater area of Virginia, Katherine had been the bridge for each of them to go from death to life: from slogging through pain-filled, divided lives to accepting Jesus' invitation to bind up every wound and forgive every sin.

Katherine had a beautiful way of insinuating herself into a variety of persons' lives—men and women, singles and marrieds, gender-benders and military officers, Church of God and Catholic. Through cheerful, attentive friendship, she mirrored back to each one the truth of how Jesus wanted access to the hidden (this is a very religious area) messes in each one's life. Trust gained, she would then say something like: 'Hey, I'm joining with a group of likeminded people seeking Jesus tomorrow night...Wanna come? I'll pick you up.'

Each one then began the 20-week Living Waters series which Katherine ran like a champ. The groups swelled in size and soon she was running 3 or 4 programs a year, often simultaneously and in different churches throughout the area. Waters of healing rose in temples across town, and the faithful found a safe, dynamic place for becoming integrated human beings. She knew how to spot and cultivate lay leaders to tend this burgeoning work, and these ones—Shelly and Georgie and Joel and Tom and Terri and Bonnie (all present last week) and more became national-level leaders.

A fruitful life. Little did I know what Katherine possessed in her (gifting and character) and on her (Jesus' anointing). We met in the early eighties when I was president of Exodus. She worked as a student advisor at a Christian college and was concerned about the growing number of persons 'coming out'; not a struggler herself, she firmly believed St. Paul's words: 'We comfort others IN ANY affliction with the comfort we have received from the Lord' (2 Cor. 1:4). She saw wounded seekers, not deviants, through the healing lens of Jesus. She was among the first leaders trained to run Living Waters and she never looked back.

Seasons change. Growing older, she handed off what had become a full-time effort and her replacement failed. Marvelous Tom and Teri Wright took over Living Waters regional leadership and faithfully ran our groups, but the culture had changed and momentum slowed. Then Katherine was killed: this punctuated poignantly what seemed like the end of a fruitful era.

I know better now. Maybe the seed must die in order to release many more. A healing army is

arising in Tidewater again, a mystery for which leader Tom Wright has no answers. 'It is just God's timing; we had been held back and now the Spirit is mobilizing afresh those on whom Katherine laid hands'--each one intent on laying hands on others to release a fresh wave of 'living water' in Virginia.

Saints like Katherine—interceding now before the Lamb--are gifts that keep on giving.

'He who goes out weeping, carrying seeds to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him' (Ps. 126:6).

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