
The Wonder of Weakness

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Canon Lauren Holder**

Recently our family went camping with a group of friends. To many, the idea of camping with 14 toddlers probably sounds like a nightmare, especially when the forecast calls for rain all weekend. But we packed our rain jackets and galoshes and prepared for an epic weekend of puddle jumping contests.

We arrived at our yurt later than expected on Friday evening, but early enough to let the kids play with their friends while we unloaded the car. After getting all the wiggles out, we set off to tackle bedtime routines in unfamiliar spaces.

The next morning each family had their own breakfast preparations, which quickly became a loaves and fishes experience. One family had too much of something, another too little of something else. The kids quickly asked to share whatever was on their friend's plate. The adults shared all the coffee.

Many moments of community touched my heart throughout the weekend, but the most poignant was the morning of our departure. Everything around us was drenched from the night before and the kids were enjoying a game of chase after the storms abated. Suddenly Jay and I heard the cries of our son. Even with 14 toddlers, you know the distinct sound of your own child's cry. Rushing over, Jay began asking the kids what had happened and how Charlie had fallen. I took one look at Charlie's head and said, "It doesn't matter what happened—we have to get to a hospital."

The next ten minutes are a blur. Two parents rushed to help Jay pack the car. One parent put a blanket on the table for Charlie to lay on. Another grabbed the first aid kit. The children gathered around Charlie, his closest friend sitting right beside him, calm and comforting as could be while Charlie cried. Soon we were getting in the car. I strapped our two kids in while Jay mapped out our course.

Before crawling into the back seat to keep pressure on Charlie's wound, several of the moms circled round me. One of them handed me some dried fruit and said, "snacks for the hospital." Only then did I let my guard down and allow myself to feel the welcome weight of their love, dissolving into tears. A moment later I put my brave face back on for the drive down the mountain.

Charlie is fine and we enjoyed an unexpected trip to the Chattanooga Choo Choo after stitches and a popsicle. I'm so glad he's ok. But I'm just as thankful for the moment of weakness—the beautiful moment of receiving love and support from my friends—a moment I could have missed if I'd been too stubborn in my bravery.

Because really—it's all brave. Going through the motions, doing what needs to be done, being the strong presence your loved one needs—all of that is brave. But setting it all down for a moment of vulnerability is also brave. Letting your friends see your fear so they pour more strength into you, sometimes that's just as hard as holding it all together. Both are important—the holding and the letting go—just like breathing in and breathing out.

I hope you too find welcome moments of weakness this summer—that you would let your guard down long enough to let others fill you up again. That you would be refreshed in your vulnerability so that you can carry on, braver than before.

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