I’ve been teased over the years about how fast I walk. A work colleague even named me Flash for running by his office “in a flash” every day. He claimed no one wanted to get in my way for fear of being run over. I do walk quickly, and it probably has to do with my predilection for getting a lot done in little time. I’m all about efficiency.

But in my single-minded focus, I can miss opportunities to connect, help, or simply be present to someone—a colleague, my spouse, or even a stranger. When I take the time to stop, I have remarkable moments of holy companionship.

Jesus, while not necessarily a divine speed walker, was heading into Nain in today’s Gospel, probably with a particular destination in mind. He could have easily walked by the passing funeral procession. But Jesus was deeply moved by this grieving widow. Jesus not only interrupts his plans—he touches the woman’s dead son, rendering Jesus ritually unclean.

Yet this risky action brings life—not just to the man, but also to his mother, whose legal standing in society was dependent on her son’s. Her life is also restored.

Jesus’ actions remind us that while our plans and projects are good, God is regularly found in interruptions—if we’re willing to stop and risk reaching out. Instead of speeding past the homeless man, might we stop and invite him for a sandwich? Instead of deftly avoiding the coworker who always has family problems to share, might we take time to listen with real empathy?

Let the interruptions come—God may be bringing new life to someone through you.†

When I take the time to stop, I have remarkable moments of holy companionship.

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**Sunday Readings**

1 Kings 17:17–24

“The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth.”

Galatians 1:11–14a, 15ac, 16a, 17, 19

“The gospel preached by me is not of human origin....But it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Luke 7:11–17

“A great prophet has arisen in our midst.”

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**A Word From Pope Francis**

*We all have within us* some areas... that ...are a little dead; and some of us have many dead places in our hearts, a true spiritual necrosis! When we are in this situation, we know it, we want to get out but we can’t. Only the power of Jesus...can help us....But if we become attached to these tombs and guard them within us and do not will that our whole heart rise again to life, we become corrupted...Let us hear that voice of Jesus who...says: “Come out! Leave that tomb you have within you. I give you life, I give you happiness, I bless you, I want you for myself.”

—Homily, April 6, 2014

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**Reflection Questions**

- What distracts me from my relationship with God?
- How might God be speaking to me through the interruptions in my life?
Ephrem was exiled to Edessa, where he spent the last ten years of his life in a cave. He died in 373.

Syriac Christianity is a lyrical, poetic approach to theology. It is not an analytic approach to the Scriptures. For Ephrem, the point of reading the Bible was to induce contemplation. He believed that every word of the Lord has its own image; each of us hears and interprets those words in accordance with our own capacity and gifts.

False doctrines were rampant in Ephrem’s time. Tradition tells us that Ephrem first heard heretical ideas in songs and, to counteract them, he made up his own hymns. Sometimes he used the same melodies.

Little is written about the role of women in liturgical worship in the early Church. Western scholars, particularly women, have developed a renewed interest in Ephrem’s ideas. He believed women had a rightful place in church choirs. Many of Ephrem’s hymns were written for women’s choirs, and he used extensive feminine imagery in his poetry. Jacob of Serugh, a sixth-century writer, referred to Ephrem as a “second Moses for women.”

The Prayer of St. Ephrem, probably the most well-known of his writings, is used for days of fasting in Eastern Christianity:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. †

Lord, your love makes me whole. Open my ears to hear your voice amid all the noise and confusion of life.

— From Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeny