

## Power

If you wanted to investigate *power*, the last of the five components of the diocesan theme, you might turn to the internet to see what you could find. The internet hits are not encouraging: a television series by the same name, lots of references to electric companies, Powerball, and Core Power Yoga. Of course you could just listen in on the conversation of two six-year olds playing make believe. Eventually, one of them will ask the other, what is your superpower? I don't think any of these are what St. Paul had in mind in writing to the Ephesians.

In fact, *power* appears in the oldest literary unit in the Bible, the "Song of the Sea":

Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power—

Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. (Exodus 15:6)

It appears in the farewell prayer of King David:

Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all (1 Chron 29:11)

At the same time that superpowers are all the rage in the Marvel comic world, some today seem to abandon or talk around the power of God. For example in the NRSV we read in Isaiah, "He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless," a verse that is rendered in the *Contemporary English Version* as "The Lord gives strength to those who are weary," and in *Good News for Modern Man*, "He strengthens those who are weak and tired." (40:29)

Again in the Gospel of Mark we read Jesus telling his disciples, "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory," a verse rendered in *The Message* as "and they'll see the Son of Man enter in grand style." (13:26)

If discussing the power of God is out of fashion today, it need not be a foreign concept for Christians, who pray daily in private prayer and weekly in corporate worship, "for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever." St. Paul has it right when he writes, "the immeasurable greatness of his power *for us who believe*." The duty for us who believe—nay, our invitation—is to call on that power.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word "power"?
2. Are you uncomfortable when the conversation shifts to the topic of power?
3. Do you generally think of power in secular ways? The power of a nuclear bomb? The power of a hurricane?
4. When we talk about the power of God, does it seem inconsistent with the image of the Prince of Peace?
5. Have you ever invoked the power of God (for healing, perhaps) when you pray?

6. If, when you were a part of a group praying, someone invoked the power of God, did it make you uncomfortable?

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