

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



Vol. 7, No. 9

Fifth Sunday of Lent 2022

Fifth Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126

2nd Reading: Philippians 3:8-14

Gospel: John 8:1-11

The scriptures for the Fifth Week of Lent have reminded me of a phrase that my mom used to tell me when I seemed to be a bit low or at some sort of crossroads in my life. She would say, “Pray like everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on you.” At the time, it often seemed to be insufficient for whatever “crisis” I seemed to be drowning in. (See, I had thought of prayer all wrong during my troubled youth. Instead of seeing prayer as an acknowledgment of my limitations, I saw it as a woefully insufficient means to my short-term desired ends.) But, as I reflect on the simplicity of her words, they take on newer meanings when considering the words of scripture.

Letting go and trusting can be incredibly difficult, but liberating. Isaiah 43:20 encourages me to relinquish preconceived notions of the “chosen” people and crush old ideas that there is one path to grace, but rather many. When I imagine the idea of “wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness,” I think of the diversity (in every sense of the word) that God has provided. There is no single mold or path. The “water that is given to the wilderness” is like the sustenance of our own uniqueness. As I hear my mom’s words, now through this lens, I hear that call to pray as a call to let go of what I cannot control. In our world, this is freeing ourselves from self-doubt or society’s expectations.

On the other side of the coin are action, power, and control. “Work as if everything depends on you.” When we are liberated from what we cannot control it is easier to take action as the people in Psalm 126:6. “Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.” We reap what we sow whether it is by action or our disposition. Be intentional in shaping your state of mind. “Brothers [and sisters], I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call” (Philippians 3:13). Philippians, in my mind, allows for many paths to peace, but one still must forge that path.

In summation, one does not work without the other, prayer, or action. I must let go of what I can’t control and focus on working towards my own best me. Or as Joel 2:12 would encourage, do what God would do and give yourself some grace, and provide compassion for others.

—Kevin Reid
St. Louis, MO