

Pastoral Reflection for May 8, 2022

In the last several years while I have been a member of the Community of Preachers and over this last year being a member of one of the St. Cronan small groups, during which our focus has been to reflect on the Sunday readings, I have gotten accustomed to approaching Scripture reading through using the style of Lectio Divina. This method essentially invites one to read, meditate, pray with and contemplate passages from Scripture – and often come to experience the presence of God and sometimes a plan for how to move forward – through this spiritual practice. This “sacred reading” of the Bible usually involves focusing in on one word or phrase that stands out in the reading(s) and provides an opportunity to slow down, savor and receive God and God’s Word in a very personal, formative and intimate way. I have found engaging in this practice with members of this community to be truly inspirational, insightful and awe-inducing.

As I poured over the readings from today, and thought about this Sunday being Mother’s Day, the last line from the Book of Revelation kept standing out to me, “God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” In John’s vision, Jesus is in the center leading and shepherding and bringing those who have “survived the time of great distress” to life-giving water – and wiping away every tear from their eyes. This is such a beautiful image of God and of the intimacy we are called to with Jesus, with our Creator. One who wipes away our tears.

There are very few people in my life who I’ve allowed into the true depths of my own sadness, hurt or shame who I’ve been vulnerable enough with to wipe away my tears. Sharing the deep parts of ourselves that are filled with pain and allowing someone to come close enough physically and emotionally to touch our face and embrace us and our emotions is sacred territory. It’s messy and it’s intimate and it can be awkward and tender and embarrassing and affirming. And full of love. For me, these kinds of moments I’ve been blessed to share the most as a daughter, held in the eyes of my mother as totally beloved and accepted in all situations as beautiful, whole and with the upmost of pride. And as a mother myself, privileged to be a tear-wiper for bruised bodies and bruised spirits, knowing that I cannot remove or prevent pain, but be present with it, and love.

I am struck by this motherly image of God, sitting with us as we survive our times of great distress, holding us close in her gaze, knowing and loving us well, reaching out and touching us tenderly - not preventing us from crying, stopping us from crying, but sitting with us in our tears and letting us know through God’s very touch that we are not ever alone in our fears or pain and that we are always loved.

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