

Psalm 126

The Lord has done great things for us



Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Joseph Parish,

Last week we had "Laetare Sunday." Laetare is the Latin word for "rejoice." And if you listen carefully, you will notice that "laetare" has the same root as the name "Leticia," which means simply "joy."

The theme of rejoicing continues this Sunday. We see a woman who sought joy in a desperate way. She wanted joy so much that she was willing to jeopardize her marriage, her family, her good name, and her life. But she did not receive joy, maybe not even pleasure. No doubt the man had told her how pretty she was, that she could count on him, that she meant more to him than life itself. But when trouble came, he disappeared. What the woman dreaded most was now happening. She got caught - and she stood alone. She could not have been more isolated - or more miserable.

The woman had hit bottom. When that happens, a person faces a choice. They can sink into bitterness and despair - or they can look up and reach out. The woman looked up. She saw a man tracing some letters on the ground: Perhaps a message for her accusers. Perhaps also a message for her. In short time, she was alone with the man, a very different man than she had ever met.

St. Augustine said that in the end only two remained: "miseria" and "misericordia" - misery and mercy. The woman represents "miseria" - human misery. Jesus embodies "misericordia" - he is the mercy of God. Jesus asks, "Woman, where are they? Has not one condemned you?" With a shyness she had never experienced, she whispered, "No one, sir." Then Jesus spoke those beautiful words: "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."

As we enter Holy Week in 7 days, a good person to walk with is the woman rescued by Jesus. She joined her own pain to the suffering of Jesus. And she, perhaps more than most others, knew the great joy of forgiveness. Jesus transformed her misery into pure joy. He wants to do that for each one of us. He wants to give us joy now. With her we can pray the beautiful words of today's Psalm: *The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.*

Have a Blessed Fifth Sunday of Lent 2025!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza.

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