

Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 3, 2022

First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm: 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6.

Second Reading: Philippians 3:8-14

Gospel: John 8:1-11

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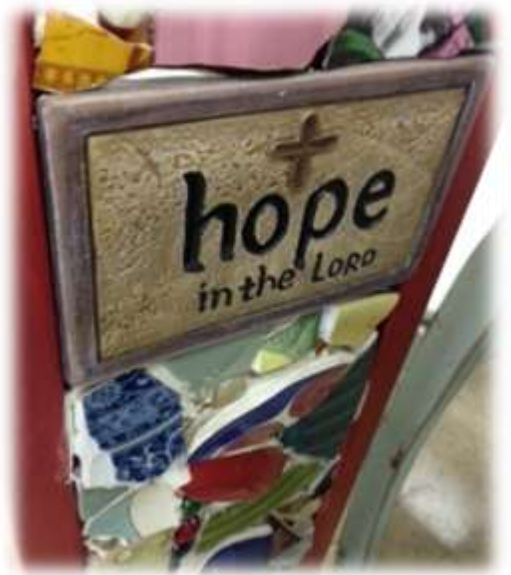


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Today Isaiah describes God saying to us, “*See, I am doing something new! ...do you not perceive it?*” (Is. 43) Then we hear St. Paul saying he has not yet reached perfect maturity in Christ but presses onward, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead “*in hope that I might possess it.*” (Phil. 3)

Lent offers the opportunity to hear these words anew and to reflect on our own baptismal invitation to new life in Christ Jesus. How vibrant is my response right now? In my busyness and with so much suffering all around, am I losing heart? Or making time—even just a few moments a day—to let God’s love embrace me where I am, exactly as I am today?

The 5th Sunday of Lent was the day we used to cover up all the pictures and statues in the church to emphasize that we are getting close to the Triduum and Easter. As a child, having given up candy for Lent, this *was* a sign of hope—at least hope for the basket of candy coming soon!

John’s Gospel today offers a sign of much deeper hope in the story of the woman caught in adultery. The law prescribed stoning as punishment for this sin. They brought her before Jesus to entrap him. Would he follow the law or would they finally have real cause to condemn him? His response? “*Let the one who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her.*” Who among us is without sin? All had to walk away. Then Jesus’ response to the woman whose sin was exposed to all? The same as his response to every sinner he encountered during his public life: love and merciful forgiveness, no strings attached. Jesus is, indeed, “*something new.*”

So I ask myself, “*Am I willing to accept the unconditional love and forgiveness that Jesus offers me today? And am I willing—as I strive to become more like Him—to offer this same kind of love, mercy and forgiveness to everyone who has offended me or my family or my country?*”

This is the challenge today’s Gospel presents to me.