

If you could have any one thing in life right now, what would it be?

We had a group of 25 people go on pilgrimage to Washington DC this past week for two days. We went to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Saint John Paul II Shrine, the Bible Museum, and the Franciscan Monastery. I hope to make this an annual trip and would encourage all of you to come and experience the beauty and sacredness of these places. While we were there, one of the things that really struck me in these locations were the beautiful mosaics. A mosaic is a picture or pattern produced by arranging together small colored pieces of hard material, such as stone, tile, or glass. There were mosaics of Our Lady, Jesus, the Last Supper and the list goes on and on.

When you look at a mosaic closeup, you can see all the little imperfections. When you back away and look at the entire mosaic, then you see the beauty of what has been created. We can look at this in two ways. The first is each of us as a person are the entire mosaic with our different imperfections (tiles) which includes all the trials, tribulations, difficulties and sins of our life. The second is looking at the mosaic where each tile is a person. The mosaic of our community is made up of so many different people from different backgrounds and places, all imperfect, yet God looks at all of us as one beautiful mosaic with each tile being made in the likeness and image of God. When we come together as one community, we can radiate the beauty of God to those around us.

Oftentimes, it is easy to find our own identity or the identity of others in the imperfections. This is exactly what the devil wants us to do. He wants us to drill down into the details of our imperfection and the imperfections of others instead of seeing the beauty God has created in each one of us. The devil wants us to look and judge the imperfections of our community and our world instead of seeing the amazing beauty God has created here on earth and in all of us. The devil calls us by our imperfections, but God calls us each by name. It is so easy to become like the Israelites in the first reading who had lost confidence and hope in God and were questioning “Is the Lord in our midst or not?” The devil wants us to believe that in times of difficulty that we have been abandoned by God. But the truth is, God is always present no matter our situation.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well in the Gospel reading today, He already knew the mosaic of her life. He knew she had five different husbands and she was not a part of the “in crowd” as a result of her life choices. Many of her tiles had imperfections. Jesus also knew the mosaic of the community. He was breaking all the rules by talking to a woman and not only a woman but a Samaritan woman and then asking her to get Him water. The tiles of the community had many imperfections as well.

Nonetheless, Jesus spends quite a bit of time with this Samaritan woman next to the well in the middle of a hot day. Why would he do this? Saint Therese of Lisieux stated that Jesus wanted the woman at the well to love Him and have faith in Him. At the same time, the Samaritan woman was identifying with the imperfections of her own life and the struggles of her current situation within the community. Deep inside she was unsettled, full of shame, full of sin, and lonely.

So here the two of them are at the well. Our second reading today from Romans echoes exactly why Jesus is at the well – to pour out the love of God into her heart. And the Samaritan woman is at the well thirsting for peace, forgiveness, release of shame, love, and as she discovers, a genuine relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is always standing at the well waiting for us to come and enter into a relationship with Him. He waits for us in prayer. Our pilgrimage group had the opportunity for adoration and benediction, Mass, and to do the Liturgy of the Hours on Wednesday night. I encourage you for the remainder of Lent to check out the prayers of the church or to attend daily Mass when you can or experience adoration here on Tuesday night. He waits for

us in reconciliation. Our group had the opportunity for reconciliation both at the Basilica and the Monastery. If you have not had the opportunity to go to reconciliation this Lent, I encourage you to avail yourself to the beautiful mercy of God. He waits for us in the Eucharist. We are about to receive the living God in the Eucharist and he LONGS to be one with us. He LONGS to be intimate with us.

I learned something while at the Saint John Paul II Shrine – Totus Tuus – Totally yours. Jesus is saying this to each one of you. My divine grace, my mercy, my love is totally yours. And Jesus thirsts for the same – that we may see Jesus in prayer, in reconciliation, and in the Eucharist and say, I am totally yours.

Mother Theresa describes how Jesus thirsts for us:

I stand at the door of your heart, day and night. I want you to know that each time you invite Me, I do come always, without fail. Silent and invisible I come, yet with a power and a love most infinite, bringing the many gifts of My Spirit. I come with My mercy, with My desire to forgive and heal you, with a love for you that goes beyond your comprehension.

I come longing to console you and give you strength, to lift you up and bind all your wounds. I bring you My light, to dispel your darkness and all your doubts. I come with My grace, to touch your heart and transform your life. I come with My peace, to calm your soul.

I know what is in your heart, I know your loneliness and all your wounds, the rejections, the judgments, the humiliations. I know, above all, your need for love, how much you are thirsting for love and tenderness.

You must never doubt My mercy, my desire to forgive, My longing to bless you and live My life in you, and that I accept you no matter what you have done.

All your life I have been desiring your love. I've never ceased searching for your love and longing to be loved by you in return. You have tried many things in your goal to be happy. Why not try opening for Me your heart, right now, more than you ever have before?

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