

4th Wednesday of Lent 2021

Isaiah 49:8-15

Thus says the LORD: In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you; and I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to restore the land and allot the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners: Come out! To those in darkness: Show yourselves!

Along the ways they shall find pasture, on every bare height shall their pastures be. They shall not hunger or thirst, nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them; for he who pities them leads them and guides them beside springs of water. I will cut a road through all my mountains, and make my highways level.

See, some shall come from afar, others from the north and the west, and some from the land of Syene.

Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, break forth into song, you mountains. For the LORD comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted.

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me."

Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

John 5:17-30

Jesus answered the Jews: "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work."

For this reason they tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for what he does, the Son will do also.

For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed.

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes.

Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life.

Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to the Son the possession of life in himself.

And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation. "I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me."



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Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?

A number of years ago, when I was in study and formation to become a deacon, we were given certain exercises to help us discern and articulate what we thought may be God's call to ordination.

One such exercise was writing about our personal history of becoming aware of God's love.

Well, one usually reflects recently and moves backwards in time in our memory.

I remember my courtship and marriage to my blessed wife, the grandmother of our grandchildren. I remember my buddies from school and how we were loyal through thick and thin. I remember growing up with my brothers and that even after fights, they were still there for me.

I remember my parents' love for me.

I remember the joy, loyalty and affection that we shared. Surely there is something of God through all that.

I don't know how far back you can remember. I can only remember back to around 4 years old. I can remember in the middle of the night being very sick, violently sick. I remember fever and chills and violent upheavals that left me in a terrible stinking mess.

Who do you call? Mahahahamm!!!

And who comes running? Who picks you up and takes you into the bath tub and gets you warm and clean and dressed in new pj's and throws a blanket around you as you sit on the bedroom

floor as she goes to change the sheets? Who tucks you in, getting the blankets tight and warm around you, says a prayer and gives you a kiss to put you asleep?

You know, a 4-year-old does not have much experience in the world and at that age is pretty self-centered. Still, even a 4-year-old has the intuition to realize that all that cleaning up in the middle of the night would not be much fun for Mom... or for anybody.

Why did she? It's because Moms love their kids. But this is not the love that is joyful, loyal or affectionate (at least not until the last kiss on the cheek).

This is a different kind of love.

Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?

The tenderness a mother shares comes after the trials of child-birth. This is a different kind of love.

This is the kind of love that Jesus shares from the cross. It is the love of sacrifice. It is the love that inspires one to choose the other person's welfare first. It is the love that can be counted upon, dependable throughout time. You see, when a person loves like that, they love like God loves. And when one loves like God loves, they grow in the divinity that God has created them for.

My Sunday School teachers and catechists taught me about God and how he loves like that.

I get it, because I know personally how my Mom loves like that.

Next time, I may talk to you about how my Dad is my hero, but for now, let us spend some quiet time in gratitude for our moms' love, a divine love.

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Muriel Eleen Hall (1923-2013)
with my oldest brother, Denny.
She was beautiful throughout. He was cute back then.