

Homily 4th Sunday of Lent B - Laetare Sunday 2021

Ronald Rolheiser tells the following story: Eric Liddell, the Olympic runner, after whom the film, *Chariots of Fire*, was made said: “*When I run, I feel God’s pleasure.*” In his quest to win an Olympic gold medal Eric was motivated more by his faith than by his own ego. His faith had him believe that, since God gave him his unique talent, God took a genuine delight in seeing him use that gift. In his heart, he sensed that God was pleased whenever he exercised that talent at its optimum. Moreover, this inner sense that God was happy with the use of his talent filled Eric with a wonderful energy whenever he ran. It would seem, therefore, that the root and source of Eric’s motivation and pleasure in running was, ultimately, not his desire to win gold medals and popular adulation, though clearly, he was not immune to them. Rather he was motivated by an inner sense that God had given him a special gift and that God wanted him to use that gift to its fullest, and that God was happy when he optimised that gift. He knew that the deepest joy he felt in using his gift had its ultimate source in God, not his own ego. When anyone, therefore, uses the gifts that God gave them properly, God will take pleasure in them. After all God gave us that gift and that gift was given for a reason.

We have much to rejoice today, especially for our mothers who nurtured us in love and who exemplified the care and nurturing love of God for us. As we rejoice, let us remember that this brings pleasure to God as we give thanks and praise to be blessed by God is so many ways. Just as God takes pleasure in us using our gifts to the best of our ability, it also brings pleasure and joy to our mothers.

In Celtic designs, all paths are interconnected and flow into and out of each other, they are without beginning or end, yet originate and end in God. This flow of life, from God and from our mothers has many names including love, grace, talents, abilities, kindness, compassion, faith, hope. Try as we might, therefore, we never, never stand alone.

The following prayer which, when shared, reveals our interconnectedness

*Bless to me, O God, each thing mine eye sees;
Bless to me, O God, each sound mine ear hears;
Bless to me, O God, each odour that goes to my nostrils;
Bless to me, O God, each taste that goes to my lips;
Each note that goes to my song;
Each ray that guides my way,
Each thing that I pursue,
Each lure that tempts my will,
The zeal that seeks my living soul,
the Three that seek my heart.
The zeal that seeks my living soul,
the Three that seek my heart. – “Carmina Gadelica” Alexander Carmichael*