

Great turn out for the first annual 5K Falcon Fun Run

Thank You to Kari Dannemiller and her mountain of hours and army of volunteers who put it together to help buy new water fountains for our school. You all represented our school and parish in a wonderful light and made us all very proud. So thank you!

Since I had 5k and event runs on the brain,

I recently noticed an oval sticker on a car like the ones that usually say how many miles or kilometers they ran and they usually say 5k, 10k or a whole marathon. This one had an odd number on it like 14.7k and underneath it said, "I got lost".

Fortunately, no one got lost because there were volunteers who posted signs pointing the way, and stood on the sides cheering on the runners as they made their way to the finish line which earned them a nice Knights of Columbus breakfast. No one can truly appreciate what all goes into planning a large event like this unless they've actually been in charge of doing something like it before. Most of us have little idea of what all is involved to make it successful. Successful in this case is to make it across the finish line.

Sometimes we hear comparisons of the spiritual journey to a marathon reminding us Christians that the journey is like a marathon and not a sprint. I.e. It takes a long time, a lot of training and most of all a heart to want to make it to the finish. In our spiritual marathon God has the route all planned out for us, He has all the signs along the way if we just pay attention., He's got helpers, if we're willing to let them help us, and finally we have to trust that God will get us across the finish line. That's the hard part for most of us, because we have to let the Lord plan the course for us to run. That's hard for most of us because it requires placing our trust in something that we can't control or be certain of how it will end, or what might happen along the way.

We have to trust that God will take care of us but to do that requires something of us and that something is what we call obedience. Living our life in obedience to God means living a life of listening to Him rather than the world or to our own voice. God has a grand plan that we all fit into and so when we become mavericks and run off course, it throws a kink into the whole design because our small human thinking is not in line with God's mind. If life is not going well for us then it would be wise for us to take a step back, let the dust settle so we can tell if the spotlight is all on me or something else. There is usually a bigger picture that we probably can't see.

God says your ways are not my ways. We usually don't think like God, but That is our goal. To be like Him. That takes time and spiritual exercises to think like Him, and He understands that about us. Which is why God's mercy is bigger than the justice that we deserve for when we are small minded. He puts signs all along the for us to go down the right path but we are the ones who take a wrong turn and complain about how life is unfair. If we find ourselves lost sometimes it's because we are likely thinking like man does and not as God does.

Remember the Frank Sinatra song, "I did it my way"? The lyrics aren't that bad if you read them as someone who gets their strength from God but the title is so ego centric. I heard that played at a catholic funeral one time. Don't ever do that. They say "I did it my way, is the theme song in hell. We don't want to do it my way. We want to do things Gods way. God's love is so much bigger than ours. When one loves, one does not calculate.

So says St. Therese of Lesieux whose feast day is today. God is not fair but he's not fair in the right way. His mercy is greater than we deserve. No one can run our race for us but the more people there are on the sidelines and streets who help us know when to turn, offer a drink of encouragement or cheer us on to the finish, are all important to each person's run. We are all in this alone together. We all need help and guidance to get on course, stay on track and finish the race. That help doesn't just come from ourselves. We have the church on earth and the church in heaven. The church militant and the church triumphant.

The Christians that truly love us, the saints that pray for us and the angels that fight for us and cheer us on to the finish. We pride ourselves in this country as people who work hard for what we have. But sometimes that can be a false pride. None of us get to where we are without the help of others, especially those who have come before us, and those who are helping us now. There is nothing in sacred scripture or church tradition that says it is a virtue to strike out on your own and conquer life. The military says be all you can be but they do it as a team and they also leave no man behind.

John Donne said:

“No man is an island,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind.”

So to reach the finish line to achieve the prize, which is eternal life with Christ Himself, we cannot just do it my way or the highway. How do I get there? How do I get to the finish line? Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus. Be someone who encourages others. God is an encourager not an accuser. Care. Care about others and show compassion and mercy. The person next to you may be an expert at hiding their hurt or pain. Today may be the only chance you have to care for them. Be joyful. But be genuine. God calls us to be completely and truly our authentic selves.

We are going to be crabby and grumpy some days but that doesn't mean we can't show empathy. Complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others. Being of one mind doesn't mean we lose our individualism. When we think like God, act like God we become more and more like Him. And God is the most authentic, original, complete, intelligent and creative person that there is.

What race am I running in? How am I helping others get to the finish line?