

Wednesday Lenten Reflection
Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Fourth Week Of Lent
Isaiah 49: 8-15
John 5: 17-30
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It is very ironic that I have been asked to write a Lenten reflection on this date, April 3. Why, because this date forty-five years ago is permanently etched in my memory. As many will remember, on this date in 1974 numerous tornados touched-down and caused mass destruction in the Northern Kentucky, Cincinnati, and Dayton areas. This was the date when the city of Xenia, Ohio was leveled by these tornados. It was truly a day a fear for all who lived in these areas.

I want to connect these events to our first reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah, God says he will fulfill the covenant with his people. Salvation will take place for the desolate heritages, for the land, for prisoners, to those in darkness, etc. And as God was faithful in sending to us his son into our world for our light and salvation, so was God faithful in giving hope and promise to the residents of Xenia and all other areas that were torn by the natural disasters of 1974. If you go into those communities today, people are living there lives again and their neighborhoods and cities have been rebuilt. Yes, God was faithful to the people of these communities to rebuild their lives and the practical application we should take from this is that in the times of our own distress, God will be faithful and will renew and recreate us and our situations and surroundings. We are not, we are not left orphans, as Scripture makes clear.

For those of us who worry a lot and are concerned if our difficult times will improve, it is important for us during these Lenten days to remember and always keep in mind the reality of the Paschal Mystery-that our crosses will lead to new life. For me to realize that our God is a God of restoration and that in the end-all-and-be-all, God provides. This is a fundamental part of our faith. I always remember and keep in mind the words that our late brother, Father Bill Behringer used at funeral homilies at St. Aloysius Parish in Cleveland-that "God always wins!" As I reflect on it, it is important for me during this Lenten season to renew my hope and belief in the new life God offers me, even during questioning and concern. For all of us, we need to be signs of hope and new beginnings in a world that is broken in so many ways. Voices of hope are critical today.

I close this reflection with the refrain of an African American hymn we used at St. Aloysius that sums this up:

*God never fails, oh God never fails
He abides in he gives me victory. Oh God he never fails.
Just keep he faith and never cease to pray, just walk upright morning, noonday or
night. He'll be there, he'll be there. There's no need to worry cause God, God, he never
fails.*