

Fifth Sunday of Easter

1 Peter 2:4. Beloved: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.



Joan Boyer is wife, mother of eight, a member of both the Celebration and the Resurrection choirs. Joan is a talented poet, often sharing her work with her choir family.

This reading reminds me of the way my dad lived. He always put himself last. The time from Christ's agony at Gethsemane to his dying at Calvary has always touched my soul. No matter what time of the year, when I think of the fact that Jesus could take all of that and still forgive is amazing to me. My family calls me a pacifist, but I just think I'm trying to be Christ-like. There is no place in this world for violence or name-calling. Sometimes name-calling is the worst kind of violence. It can cut deeper than a physical wound.

I just remember my dad and I try to be like him. Christmas was his favorite time of the year. He was buried two days before Christmas, but I still leave a present under the tree to remember him and to remind me that his goodness should shine from me. I hope I leave that remembrance for my children.

We all need to do that. We need to build a house within ourselves where we decide what is important and how we can make a difference. It's in the simple, everyday things we do like offering a smile to someone at the grocery store. Isn't that what we're all about?

My heart stopped beating three times in one day and I realized that no one knows when death will come. There is no warning, it just happens. I had no idea that my heart had stopped until I came out of it. That's how quick the end will come. We don't have time to fool around! We have to make kindness a priority every day.

I've been reading a series of books by an Episcopal minister. In one of those books he describes the Our Father as the perfect prayer. This minister prays that prayer daily in hopes of his being a blessing to someone each day. I pray that prayer as well, for my kids. I hope that they're a blessing to someone every day.

We're not perfect! We're all a work in progress. Look at the example we have in Jesus. I saw Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." The story is so much more vivid when a person actually sees it. It's worse than anyone could imagine in their darkest dreams, but it make people feel almost joyful that Christ would go through all of that and still say, "Forgive them." It's so hard to comprehend, but I think we all need to work at grasping it.

My aim in life is that when someone looks at me they see a bit of Jesus shining through. The Gospel tells us that this is how we are to be!

We can't let others build our houses. We must build them ourselves. We have to think about what is important. Actually, we are all alone. A person can have a family and children, but inside ourselves we are all alone with God. It's kind of like being in a crowd and being all alone. Eventually we've got to build up, as the Polish people used to say, "the jewels in our crown." And we do this on our own. We ultimately make our own decisions about what is important in our lives.

In the end, what people want isn't the money a person had. What is valuable is something tangible, a sentimental object like the gravy boat mother used at Christmas or the pan that the bread rose in. It was the favorite little things that were important, with all the memories attached to them.

In our family music is important. When we have a family get-together, we always sing our favorite songs, whether that includes "O Danny Boy," or "I Will Raise You Up." I know what music means, so being part of the resurrection choir is important. I know what it's like to go to a church where there is no music for a funeral. Music is a comfort to people. It is an avenue of healing. One time a lady came to me after a funeral and told me that although she was Baptist, she had come to many Catholic funerals and just fell in love with the song, "On Eagle's Wings."

There was no television when I was young and we lived very close to the church. My dad used to take the nuns to the doctor and we used to talk to the priests and sisters all the time because they would be out for a walk in the evening and everyone would be sitting on their front porches watching the kids play. Our whole life was church. It wasn't a bad life. If I could give my children one thing it would be their faith. It was hard to send them to a parochial school. It was a sacrifice, but we did it. Today they are grateful for that education. Faith is everything. Faith is our life.

I wish everyone felt like I do when I come to church. When I sit with the choir I feel that this is probably the only place where I feel that I'm not alone, where I belong. When I'm at home, sometimes I don't feel that I belong there as much as I belong in church!

It is these tangible examples that make a difference. There is a ripple effect. If you're an example of Christ's love to one person, they learn how to show that love to others. When my children were growing up, I didn't want them to smoke or drink, so I didn't do it. My mother was the same way. I couldn't simply tell them, I had to show them.

In ordinary ways we can do extraordinary things! In the normal course of a day, in small, ordinary ways, we can have an effect on the world.

Can you offer a commitment of time and talent within the music ministry of the parish? Julie Richards would be happy to receive your e-mail at jrichards@stjohndavison.org or she can be reached by phone at 658-1135.