

Grounded 1

My dreams reveal one frustrated guy. I wake up half-smiling at the heart's antics: I can't get out of the room or parking lot, no exit, strange humiliations where others have the upper hand and I am out-of-control. This lockdown may just make me loony. In that way, I am a thoroughly fallen American—you know, manifest destiny, don't fence-me-in, smaller-the-government-the-better kind of stuff.

I am glad for Jesus' mercy on my stalled but seething heart. And for His Church. On what may be the last homily I'll hear in person for a while, Father Justin (what a guy) preached on the Samaritan woman. He centered on the fact that Jesus 'had to go through Samaria' (Jn. 4:4) in route to Jerusalem. Better put, He chose to go out of His way into this compromised and slightly hostile land in order to extend mercy to a compromised, slightly hostile woman.

Justin's point? Jesus will go to any length to find you. He will tear up the map, overlook your rebellious thoughts and actions, and pierce every veil in you that repels 'living water.' He'll wear Himself out just to look into your eyes and love you. Lockdowns give you a lot of time to just be loved.

Annoying. I want to act! I don't want to be the object of desire, I want to be the subject, doing what I want! Well, well. Times have changed.

I was musing on how my roving heart is particularly unsuited for now when I ran into a woman (bad word choice; I kept a polite distance) for whom I had prayed but never met face-to-face. Abbey and I had seen her at different coffee joints; she was evidently trying to erase her womanhood and had adopted a male name.

We both caught her name and brought it into staff intercession. For about 6 months we regularly lifted her up and then, voila, she appeared. Grateful to shake off my self-concern for a moment, I gently told her that Jesus had placed her on my and another colleague's heart, and that we felt a bit like we knew her as we gathered to pray and caught something of the Father's love for His very special daughter. Simple. 'God loves you that much,' I said and went on my way.

My lockdown may well be an occasion to pray for Samaritans and to enter more deeply into His merciful heart for them. For all of us.

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