

4th Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2020

Gerda Weissmann is ninety-six years old. She was born in Poland. She is a holocaust survivor. She told her story in the award-winning documentary film called “One Survivor Remembers.” She was in several concentration camps during the war. In May of 1945, the camp she was in was liberated by the American army. She described seeing American soldiers for the first time and was struck by the dignity they showed to prisoners who were so used to being brutalized and beaten.

She described meeting the first American soldier and said, “I remember the aura of him and my disbelief to see someone who fought for our freedom and my ideals. He looked like God to me. He asked about my companions and said, ‘May I see the other ladies?’ a form of address we hadn’t heard for six years. I told him they were inside but that they were too sick to walk. He said, ‘will you come with me?’ He held the door open for me and let me precede him. And that was the moment of restoration of humanity, of humaneness, of dignity, of freedom. He opened not only the door for me and my liberation but the door for my life and my future.”

Chapter 10 in St. John’s Gospel is filled with images, with Jesus trying to reveal His identity to the Pharisees. But John says that they couldn’t get the meaning of his figures of speech. We may struggle with these images too. But hearing Gerda Weissmann’s story, one thing seems clear. What a young G.I. did for her in 1945, is very much what Christ wants to do for you and me. Christ wants to restore us. He wants to restore our humanity, our humaneness, our dignity, and our freedom as God’s children. These may also be among the things we feel are being threatened by the coronavirus pandemic. Yet it’s always true that the voice of the Good Shepard still speaks in times of turmoil and fear. So, if we hear His voice in these difficult times, let us follow Him by acts of kindness, mercy, patience, and courage this week. This is how we can experience the abundant life that Christ offers.

Fr. Valentine

Scripture Readings: <http://uscgb.org/bible/readings/050320.cfm>