

# DIOCESE WIDE Lenten Book Study



## Chapter Six Reflection

The Sixth Word: *"It is finished."*

By Elizabeth Kelly

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### There's still time to finish well

At about this point every year in Lent, I've grown a little weary, maybe a little lax on my Lenten resolutions. Last weekend's record snow fall was no help. My dear husband, God bless him, spent Lord's day blowing and shoveling to near exhaustion. Furthermore, last weekend it was below zero; this weekend it will reach nearly 70 degrees. The world is a sloppy soup and I'm ready for this messy part of spring to be done with. I'm ready for a little Easter glory. It can be a temptation at this point in these forty holy days to throw in the towel and just coast until Holy Week. But as our chapter this week reminds us, there's still time to finish well. There's still time to, as my brother would say, "leave it all on the course."

### Lord, redeem my past!

I once had a wonderful neighbor who recently died at 100 years old. Her children, ten of them, faithfully took turns living with her so that she might remain in her own home until she was 98. I would occasionally chat with one of her older sons who frequently stayed with her for days at a time in his retirement. While I watered my flower beds, he would sit on his stoop and have a smoke and sometimes lament his youth. By his account, he was a wild kid and a bit of a worry to his parents. He clearly regretted that. One day I simply said, "But you're here now, caring for her, and that's what matters." He looked up from his cigarette, smiled at me and said, "You're all right, kid."

Even St. Teresa of Avila had her "prayer to redeem lost time." I pray it often:

*Source of all mercy! . . . While recalling the wasted years that are past, I believe that You, Lord, can in an instant turn this loss to gain. . . I firmly believe that You can do all things. Please restore to me the time lost, giving me Your grace, both now and in the future . . . Amen.*

When I am tempted to imagine that my past—or even my Lent—is irredeemable, I think about my neighbor's son and about my brother's encouragement. Whatever kind of Lent—or life—you've had to this point, our God is still the source of all mercy and perfect restoration. There's still time to leave it all on the course, to finish strong. I'll join you.

As ever, you remain in my prayers. I look forward to seeing you on March 22 at 7 pm for our live talk on "Fear in the Life of the Christian." Is it possible that fear has a role to play in the life of the faithful? I hope you will join us.

