



By Pat Haggerty

The recent tragedy surrounding the Boston Marathon has shocked us all! What started out as a long-standing tradition on a beautiful day ended in sadness and chaos. Yet, there rose out of that horror a spirit of courage, of unselfishness, of valor, and of love. We saw images of pain, shock, and loss; but, above all that, we saw examples of true Christ-like behavior. Everyone from first responders to participants and to by-standers did what they could for those in need.

Since that horrific day, echoes of “be strong” have resonated throughout Boston, throughout Massachusetts and beyond. We have heard personal stories of those affected by the bombings. We have read articles about those who stepped in to provide assistance. Many of us have attended services to pray for those who were killed and hurt on that April day.

We want to forget that day, but we can't---and we shouldn't. We need to learn from that day. We need to recall the strength of those involved, the compassion of those who helped and the resilience of those who will move on.

As I was looking at the gospel for the fifth Sunday of Easter, I found it to be so ironic. The message of that gospel totally parallels the unforgettable Boston Marathon of 2013! Mark recounts in his gospel the story of the scribe who asked Jesus which of the commandments was first: “Jesus replied, ‘The first is this: Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.’ “

Certainly those who gave of themselves to assist others at the Marathon were living the message of loving their neighbor. Let us reflect on this as we try to make sense of the happenings of April 15th. Let us continue to pray. Let us . . ."be strong!"