

The Flow of Energy — A Modern Day Parable

Inspired by John 15:1-8

Amelia sat alone in the quaint apartment. It was the only home she had ever known. Her mother died in childbirth, so it had always been just her and her father. Ben did a great job providing for the two of them and raising his daughter with humility, prayer, and love. He has been gone three months now. Cancer. It's a fickle thing. So many folks survive it. And, Ben really tried. But, it was too much for him. Amelia, a nurse by trade took great care of her father during his 5-year battle with the Big C. Now, here she sits....alone at the tiny kitchen table. 25 years old. Shy by nature. Content with life. Content with the quiet.

Ben was an electrician. He was fascinated with the hidden nature of electricity. He would say, "Electrical currents remind me of God. We don't see it working, but we see the result of its power by the light it brings to darkness -- just like God. Ben was known for his love of Sacred Scripture and he could relate anything to the Word. That was another of the blessings being raised by him.

Amelia poured a cup of coffee and sat down for her morning prayer time -- something she and her father did together every Sunday before Mass. She thought of his big, calloused hands as she held the warm cup and watched the steam rise from the dark richness in the cup. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Ahhh. She loved the smell of freshly brewed coffee. It went right to work awakening her senses before she even took the first sip.

"Holy Spirit," she whispered. "Fill my heart. Fill my room. Fill my life." She continued taking deep, slow breaths -- in....and out.....in.....and out....Her mind spun through some events of the past week, then visited memories of walks in the country with her father when she was a young girl. The thoughts and activity in her head began to slow and blur. Deep breath in, slow breath out. "Come, Holy Spirit." she whispered. "Come, Holy Spirit, Come." Silent and still. Slow breathing. Calm. Peace. Quiet. Love. A beautiful warm glow filled her mind's eye.

After several minutes, she once again became aware of the warm cup in her hands. Her face smiled and she was so thankful that her father had taught her how to step away from the world and feel God's presence in a very real way. She took a sip of coffee before opening her eyes. There was no rush to move.

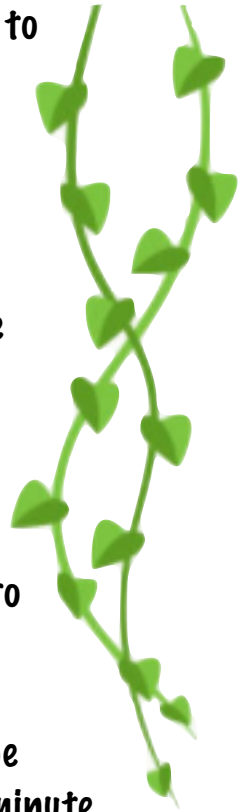
She became aware of the sun beaming through the window and opened her eyes to this beautiful beginning to a new day. Amelia opened her devotional to the Sunday Gospel and read aloud, "Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the true vine, and my father is the vine grower." She took another sip and thought of her father. Ben loved this verse. Of course, he related it to electricity!

He would say, "The power lines are like the vines. They hold great energy. But, we have to flip the switch and keep the line open." Amelia reflected on this. She imagined the energy flowing in the lines. Then, she imagined the sap flowing in the vines. Then, she imagined the blood flowing in our lives. She closed her eyes again and prayed, "How does this verse speak to me? How might I apply it to my life today, Lord?" She sat in silence reflecting and listening, remaining open to God, truly believing He would show her the way.

Amelia opened her eyes and smiled. Smile! That's it! My smile can be the vine, the electricity to bring light to others! She dressed and left for Mass. It was a 17-minute walk to St. Joseph Church. Her first opportunity to share a smile came before she even left the building. Old man Rogers was perched in his usual spot by the window in the lobby. No one knew his age or his story. He just wasn't much for conversation and preferred to keep to himself. The sound of her footsteps caught his ear and he turned toward the noise out of instinct. Amelia waved and flashed her best smile to try and crack through his gruff armor that was always showing. The old man simply turned away with seemingly no interest whatsoever.

Ouch! Not a good start, Amelia thought. She continued praying the verse from John, "He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit." Her heart hurt a little from the sting of Old Man Rogers' reaction, but her plan was to remain in good spirits and keep going. "God bless him. God bless me." she prayed and stepped out onto the sidewalk. The bright light of the sun gave her renewed hope. "I'm gonna keep my switch on and not block the power of the Holy Spirit," she coached herself.

It was still early, so there weren't many people out and about yet. Amelia kept her chin and eyes up. She didn't want anything to crush her mood. "If you remain in me and my words



remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. Stay with me, Lord. I'm still here with you."

A few blocks later, Amelia noticed a gruff looking couple approaching from the opposite direction. Their faces were wrinkled, seemingly cemented into angry scowls. She contemplated crossing the street to avoid them. After all, she didn't want their bitterness to contaminate the air around her. But, Holy Spirit nudged her. "Remain in me. They've just flipped the switch, blocked the sap, stopping the flow of love and light. Smile! Open the lines!"

Though a little nervous, Amelia stayed the course. Hope outweighed doubt by a slim margin. She slid her sunglasses on top of her head, so her smile would radiate from her eyes and mouth. "Come Holy Spirit" Three more steps. Eye contact. **SMILE!!!!** The man nodded, slowed his pace a bit, and held Amelia's gaze. She stopped in front of them and declared, "Isn't this a beautiful morning? I pray this day will bring you joy!" The couple stopped and looked at Amelia, amazed that she spoke to them. Strangers. Minding their own business.

Amelia held her smile, and suddenly -- they flipped the switch and allowed the goodness to flow. The couple's faces smoothed as they relaxed into beautiful smiles. "Thank you!" The woman exclaimed. "Thank you! God bless you!" Amelia nodded and felt light as air. They parted and continued going their separate ways, never to see each other again. The couple looked up and noticed how brilliant the sun was shining. They hadn't even noticed, they were so settled in darkness and apathy.

Amelia reached the steps of St. Joseph. She smiled bigger than ever and entered the sanctuary. Blessing herself with the sign of the cross, she prayed, "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

