

Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Several years ago when the Olympics were held in Barcelona, Spain, the world saw one of the greatest moments in Olympic history. Derek Redmond, a young man from Britain, had dreamed all his life of winning a gold medal in the 400 meter race. He had worked hard to get to the Olympics and his dream was within his reach. He was in the semi-finals and was running the race of his life. He could see the finish line just ahead as he rounded the final turn. Suddenly, he felt a sharp pain in the back of his leg and he fell to the track with a torn muscle in his right leg.

As the medical attendants ran toward him, Derek struggled to his feet. He started to hop toward the finish line on one foot in an attempt to finish the race. Suddenly, a large man came out of the stands, pushed aside a security guard and ran to Derek's side. It was Jim Redmond, Derek's father. "You don't have to do this," he told his son. "Yes, I do," said Derek. "Well, then," said his father, "we're going to finish this together."

And they did. They stayed in Derek's lane all the way to the end. At first, the crowd watched in silence. Then they rose to their feet and cheered. Derek Redmond didn't win the gold medal, but he walked away with the incredible memory of a loving father who, when he saw his son in pain, left his seat in the stands to help him finish the race.

Life is like a race that has been set before us. We may struggle and face many obstacles, but we have a great crowd of witnesses who are cheering us on. We have a Heavenly Father who loves us and will help us when the pain is too great. We have a Savior, who left his place in heaven and came to earth to show us how to run the race. If we will keep our eyes on him, how can we help but finish the race?