

**The Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
February 5, 2012**

**Center for Spirituality and Sustainability
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Edwardsville, Illinois**

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In 1977 the group Kansas added a song to their album *Point of Know Return* that soared to the top of the music charts. This last minute addition – which was almost not included on the album – became their most popular song. The song, of course, is “Dust in the Wind” and it echoes the sentiments of Job expressed well in the first reading today.

After everything in his life was taken from him – his family, his livestock, his crops, and even his health – Job sighed, saying, “Remember that my life is like the wind” (Job 7:7).

In “Dust in the Wind,” Kansas sang:

I close my eyes
Only for a moment and the moment's gone
All my dreams
Pass before my eyes with curiosity

Dust in the wind
All they are is dust in the wind

Same old song
Just a drop of water in an endless sea
All we do
Crumbles to the ground, though we refuse to see

Dust in the wind
All we are is dust in the wind

If Kansas is right – if everything we do crumbles to the ground and if all we are is dust in the wind – then Job’s question is almost certainly true: “Is not man’s life on earth a drudgery” (Job 7:1)?

There are many people today who go from day to day with this question ever in the hearts. Caught up in the lies of society that promise happiness but cannot give it, they do not realize why they feel like dust in the wind, being blown about with no real purpose or direction, simply going through life for the next moment of the promise of a fading happiness. If this is all there is to life, Kansas is right: the moments pass and are simply gone. Those who live this way feel as if their lives are nothing more than dust in the wind. If this is all there is to life, Job is right when he said, “My days are swifter than the weaver’s shuttle; they come to an end without hope” (Job 7:). If happiness never lasts, if happiness is unattainable, then life is without hope and without purpose.

But perhaps Kansas is not quite right. Perhaps something does remain of what we do. Perhaps we are more than dust in the wind. Perhaps man's life on earth is not a complete drudgery. Perhaps there is something more to life than the same old song. Perhaps there is a happiness that lasts.

If we are honest, is this not the deepest desire of our hearts, to be eternally happy? It is this confidence that led the Psalmist to sing, "Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted" (cf. Psalm 147:3).

The people of Capernaum knew this Psalm and recognized in Jesus the one who "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). For this reason Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Everyone is looking for you" (Mark 1:37). They knew that he "is our LORD and mighty in power" and that "to his wisdom there is no limit" (Psalm 147:5) and so they sought in him the peace and the happiness for which their restless hearts yearned.

It is truly in him alone that lasting happiness is to be found and in him alone that our hearts will at last be at rest. The Lord

himself acknowledged this when he said, “For this purpose have I come” (Mark 1:38).

Have you not come to Mass today because you, too, are looking for Jesus? Perhaps you have in search of something you are not yet able to name. What you seek can only be found in Jesus. Your heart, too, may be restless, as are the hearts of many of your peers.

Saint Augustine knew this restlessness well and he struggled with it for many years. He knew that he had been living a life of great sin and within his heart their stirred a desire for greatness. This is desire is your hearts, as well. At long last, Augustine came to realize that the only way he could arrive at greatness was to abandon his sinful life; he came to realize that, as he said, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Is your heart this day at rest, or do you long for an unfading happiness and peace? Look for Jesus and you will find what you desire! Just as went off for the nearby villages to teach the people around him, so, too, does he go off in search of us. He comes to in

the Scriptures, in the presence of the community of the Church, in the persons of his ministers, and most especially of all in the Eucharist.

If we can keep ourselves quiet and still, we will hear him speaking to us in the silence of our hearts which will slowly begin to burn within us as recognize that a life lived in the company of Jesus is not a life of drudgery but one of deep-seated joy (cf. Luke).

In this we see that the song of Kansas was an unfinished melody. There is something that remains. Though we are formed from the dust of the earth, we are more than simple dust in the wind for the very breath of God was breathed into us and gave us life. There is something more to life than the same old song. In the end, all that remains is love and this love has gone out in search of us and is continually in search of us. At the end of this month, on Ashe Wednesday, we will be reminded that we are dust, and unto dust we shall return. But the remains of this life will be raised up to new life to fulfill the promise of the resurrection.

Your peers, dear brothers and sisters, need to see in your life the hope and the joy that comes from a relationship with Jesus

Christ. They need you to help them realize whom they seek and they may even need you to bring them to the Lord. Do not be afraid to do so, but with the humble conviction of faith, help them to know that the Lord does indeed heal the brokenhearted and he waits for them in the Sacrament of Confession, in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist. Help them to understand that their hearts will only be at rest in the One who breathed their very life into him and that in him alone will they find the greatness they desire.

May God give us this grace.