

## **Friday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 31, 2023**

Recommended readings: p. 412, "July 17, 1984," pp. 413-414, "Rainbows..." pp. 422-434, "Progress" (part one)

Kiese Laymon's essay, "Rainbows Aren't Real, Are They?" describes her sister's reaction to Jesse Jackson's 1984 call for a "Rainbow Coalition" as "Rainbows, they pretty, but they ain't real." In response, Laymon writes, "But if believing in rainbows makes us love better, then rainbows can be just as real as work. And love. And if we really believed, we might be able to bring [our friend's deported] granny back. And one day, instead of building houses for white folks, in neighborhoods where we could never even visit if we weren't working there, we could maybe build beautiful houses with gardens where all our grannies could sit on porches, and safely tell all those good lies that sound true."

*God said, "Here is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature for ageless generations: I set my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, my bow will appear in the clouds. Then I will remember the covenant that is between me and you and every kind of living creature, and never again will the waters be a flood to destroy all life. Whenever my bow appears in the clouds, I will see it, and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature on the earth." (Genesis 9:12-16)*

Rainbow: a natural spectrum caused by dispersion of sunlight by tiny water droplets in the atmosphere; a sign of hope, a promise of beauty and acceptance after a time of trouble or turmoil; a symbol of inclusivity and diversity, an all-embracing image of love and friendship. For many marginalized people, believing that the rainbow is real suggests reaching out with faith, expressing hope. Hope that things might get better. Hope that people who seem different might be accepted without restrictions. Hope that justice might be dealt equitably. Hope that we can practice inclusion, not exclusion. Hope that different religious, ethnic, and racial groups might work together to make a better world, one without the bigotry and fear that seem so often to take precedence in our world. Hope that God's promises may be realized among us.

### **Prayer**

Creator of us all, Lover of all that is, show us again and again the promise of your rainbow. Show us that we are all yours, and that as sisters and brothers, we are one family. Help us act so that we can see in our lives and the lives of those around us the promise you have offered, the covenant you have made with us. Redirect us when we act out of fear or greed. Remind us that your Son always acted out of selfless love, even to the point of death on the cross. Give us strength, God, to understand who our neighbors are—that they, like us, are all your children—and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.