

Homily 8-29-10 – Twenty second Sunday in Ordinary Time

My wife and I attended a wedding reception recently.
Name cards were set up on a table near the entrance.
Our table number was on the card

A woman next to us said to her husband, “I hope we are seated upfront”

My wife whispered to me, “I hope we sit with friendly people.”
I said forget that, “I hope were seated next to that cookie table!”

She said, “OK Deacon Bob, (reminding me of my diet) Just wipe the cookie crumbs off your chin before you give the blessing.”

Suzan has a nice way of keeping me grounded and focused to what’s important. And I must admit, this at times can be very humbling.....It’s a good thing she didn’t see me shoving cookies in my pockets. Cookies and..... humble pie.

Humility is the common thread running through all three of the readings today.

Jesus stresses the importance of being humble.

Not necessarily thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.

As I prepared for this homily, I spent a number of hours reading bible commentaries and praying over the readings. Searching for the Holy Spirit’s guidance and direction.

Much is written on humility, especially the humble qualities of successful people. Much is written on Ego, self enduldgence ...lack of humility.

Don't you find it refreshing when you watch a post game interview of a star athlete and they thank God for their successes. Or Point out that it was truly a team effort that provided the win.

Too often we see athletes under the spotlight wrapped up in ego and self indulgence.

Tiger Woods self indulgence. Look to the pain he put on his wife and children.

The Lebron James fiasco on ESPN. The self proclaimed "King James"...Ego and disregard for a community that loved him and supported him. He now finds himself carrying the heavy burden of ego....and poor decisions.....putting self first.

On the other hand who saw the movie Blindsight?

A story of a woman and her family that emptied the comfort of their lives and home to take in a homeless teen, so that he might have a chance in life.

Crossing social and racial barriers this boy became a loved member of their family. This movie is a must see if you haven't seen it yet.

In our own community, we witness humble acts of love for others 24 hours a day through the ministries we have in place here.

People putting others first. Anonymous donations to the mercy fund. Stephen ministry. crisis ministry.

Visitors to the homebound

And hospitalized. Soup kitchen ministry feeding the hungry.

Ministry of presence. No fanfare...just quietly showing up.

When we humbly care for others, we enter into their suffering.

Think about this: In Philippians 2: 5-12, Paul speaks of our humble God that emptied himself and taking the form of a human being entered into our world, walked among us.

Entered into our suffering, felt our pain our suffering.

Let me ask you a question.

What is an experience in Jesus' life that is similar to our own experience?

What can we draw from our own feelings, where might we connect because we have experienced it, we can own it.

Jesus was challenged by people in his own community. We have been challenged at times also.

Jesus witnessed the death of a friend. We have all experienced this.

Jesus, on the cross, felt abandoned by god, do we feel that separation in our lives?

Because we have experienced things in our humanness that Jesus experienced in his humanness we can feel it, own the suffering of Jesus...the suffering of others.

Can we empty ourselves for others as Jesus emptied himself for us?

(Open Suitcase)..... ITS EMPTY!!!

Last week I told my spiritual director that the 3 year lease was up on my 2007 Chevy Impala.

I told her, this car was loaded with all of the goodies.

When I turned it in I found that to lease a new one at this time would cost me much more than I was willing to pay.

I am better off to wait for the 2011 model to come in. This is all part of the technicalities of leasing.

So my son Bob moved back into town with two cars, and was planning to sell his old Honda. I asked him how much and told him I would buy it.

Suddenly I find myself sitting behind the wheel, for the winter, in a 13 year old vehicle with 180,000 miles on it. Peeling paint and some rust forming in the ¼ panels.

I went on to tell my spiritual director that I took the car for a spin, dressed in suit and tie. As I hopped in the seat and drove up Penfield road, stopped at the light, I found myself feeling a bit embarrassed.... Humbled?

My spiritual mentor chuckled at me and whispered “GOOD!” (Her response and wisdom begins to sink in.)

She said to me, (Pull car keys out of my pocket) “ as you get into the car, and before you start it, pause and think of the person who is driving a like vehicle, in that it’s the best that they can offer their family.” She told me to move into what that persons experience is.

She said, “Offer it up as prayers for all those people that sadly this is their luxury.”

This is what intercessory prayer really is. Having a foot in their life and praying out of that, God, please help!

Knowing what they are feeling and going through and now you can say help, in a way that really expresses it.

An exercise in spirituality, Solidarity.

And I thought, gee.....

Jesus did this for us; he was in solidarity with us. Emptied into our experience.

(TOSS THE KEYS INTO THE SUITCASE AND SLAM IT SHUT) And he carried it.

It's like when we fast we know what it really means to be hungry, and then we can pray for the people who are starving. It becomes a whole different prayer. A prayer of truth, a humble prayer.

Take some time this week with today's readings. They invite each of us to reflect on our own lives. Are we humble people? Or are we proud to be humble? Do we seek the Lord Jesus with the humility that He Himself lived?

As we come forth to receive the Body of Christ today, and Jesus enters in, allow ourselves to enter into his suffering. Let us pray for the ability and willingness to do this for one another.