

Homily of April 8th 2018

What does the resurrection look like?

Second Sunday of Easter (Or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Reading 1 (Acts 4:32-35) "The Believers Share Their Possessions"

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24) "Let Israel say: His love endures forever."

Reading 2 (First Epistle of John 5:1-6) "Faith in the Incarnate Son of God"

Gospel (Gospel of John 20:19-31) "Jesus Appears to His Disciples"

There's a story about a new priest who would was getting frustrated because every Sunday during the homily, he noticed that this elderly man in the first pew kept falling asleep. Every Sunday, he would begin his homily and within a few moments, the elderly man started sleeping. Nothing he did seemed to help. He would raise his voice, even pounded on the pulpit a few times, but nothing seemed to be able to keep this man awake. And... sitting next to this man was his grandson who never fell asleep who always stayed awake and paid attention to the homily.

Well, the new priest kept getting more and more frustrated. Then, one day — he got an idea. The perfect idea. So, one day before mass -the priest called the young boy over for a talk. He said; "You know how your grand dad is always falling asleep during the homily? Well, I got an idea. Today, when start preaching, and your grand dad starts falling asleep, how about you give him a nudge or two and keep him awake. And... if you keep him awake then give you a dollar after mass. What do you think? Keep grandpa awake during the homily and I'll give you a dollar. Deal?" The grandson loved the idea. Keep grandpa awake during the homily? And earn a dollar? This was going to be easy money.

And sure enough. The homily begins... a few moments later grandpa starts dozing off... the boy nudges grandpa and keeps him awake and everything worked as planned... grandpa stayed awake during the entire homily. After mass..., the priest gave the boy a \$1 saying, 'It worked. Great job! Let's do the same thing next week!' The boy readily agreed.

Next week came. Homily begins. Grandpa starts falling asleep. Grandson wakes him up. After mass, he gives the boy a dollar. His idea is working beautifully, The next week same thing. Grandpa sleeps boy wakes him —the priest gives him a dollar. Everything is great. Until the following week. This week, during the homily, grandpa begins to fall asleep and the boy doesn't do anything to wake him. Nothing. He lets him sleep through the entire homily! What's going on? So, after mass the priest asks the boy; "What happened? I thought we had a deal. I would give

you a dollar if you kept grandpa awake during the homily." "We did." The boy said, "but grandpa said he would give me two dollars if I let him sleep."

I brought lots of dollar bills today... just in case the person next to you begins to fall asleep...

The question I have for you today is what does the resurrection look like? What does it look like? It looks like this... (open hands). It looks like hands open wide, not closed, not clutched, not clinging to — but opened wide — like this. It looks like opening ourselves up — opening ourselves up to the possibilities of God. Opening ourselves up to the power of God, to allow God's power in our lives, to let God's power transform us and recreate us.

The SS tell us that when JC appeared to the disciples, He did so with open hands, showing His wounds, showing His side, making Himself visible — opened — with opened hands...

The resurrection posture is this openness, exposure, and not clinging, grasping, holding onto, gripping. You see, the disciples are huddled in the room, in fear, holding onto their fear and disbelief, clinging to their doubt, their fears, their inadequacies. And they won't let go! They're afraid to move, to expand, to leave the room. And JC appears to them with open hands, with hands held out. You see — JC transformed the posture of the disciples... from clutched hands to open hands. From fear of leaving the room to going forth and proclaiming the good news. From clinging onto to resentments to letting go and forgiving... whose sins you forgive are forgiven.

JC appearing to the disciples helped them to let go.... But the disciples had to let go. They had to let go of their fear, their worry, their anxiety, their resentments and their doubts... and once they did they were transformed, they too took on the posture of the resurrection, the openness of a believer and they went forth to proclaim the Good News.

They had to let go... and let go is not easy. Letting go of our own fears, resentments, doubts is not easy...

It reminds me of a story about a guy who was walking through the woods at night when it was dark. And he stepped off the path and fell off a cliff and quickly grabbed a branch that was there on the cliff. And so there he was — hanging on a cliff, at night, in the dark, all alone. And he was holding on to that branch for dear life. And so he calls out, yells out — is anyone out there? Can anyone hear me? I need help? Can anyone hear me? And then out of the darkness he hears a voice.... "Let Go!" "What? Are you crazy?" the guy replies. "I'm not going to let go. Who are you — I need help!" The voice from the dark calls back... "It is I... God... all you need to do is let go." And the guy hangs there for a moment in the dark in silence and yells back to God... "Is there anyone else up there?"

The point of the SS are clear today. God so desperately wants to change our lives, help us,

transform us — but we must be willing to let go. Let go of our fears, our resentments, our doubts. We must take on the resurrection posture of open hands, the spiritual posture of open hearts, open minds... and let God give us the courage, the strength, the peace to be who God is calling us to be.

God makes it abundantly clear that God wants us to experience the freedom and peace that comes from letting go of our fears, resentments and doubts.. God wants us to experience the resurrection, the power of God's love, the transformative power of God's love.

What does the resurrection look like? It looks like this — openness, opened hands, open hearts and minds. Not clinging, not grasping, not gripping, not clutching but open — open hands and hearts.

So the question for us becomes — what are you holding onto right now in your life. What fears and resentments are you clinging to right now? What's keeping you from accepting and allowing God's peace and love to fill you and transform you.

Are you holding onto the fear of rejection? The fear that keeps you from taking chances, from opening up more in a relationship, from trying something new at work, from standing up for what you believe in public? What fears are you holding on to that God might be asking you to let go of?

What resentments are you clinging to? Whose sins you forgive are forgiven... and yet, we hold onto resentments, cling to them, clutch them... after all, someone hurt us, angered us, wronged us... and we find ourselves holding on, clinging, grabbing. And God is inviting you today to forgive, to let go, to be open to God's love.

What does resurrection look like? It looks like this — open hands openness, open hearts and minds.

BTW, if you're looking for a good way to pray or meditate — pray with open hands. Pray with the posture of the resurrection. Let your prayer posture reflect externally what you hope to express internally ... that is a willingness to let go of those things that are keeping you from being who God is calling you to be.