

Homily
5th Sunday of Easter – A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
May 09-10, 2020

Acts 6: 1-7
Ps 33: 1-2, 4-5, 18-19
1 Pt 2: 4-9
Jn 14: 1-12

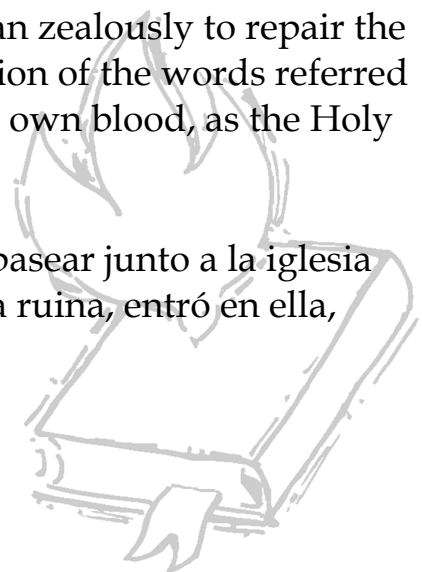
Bonaventure's Life of Francis is worth recalling:

“One day when Francis went out to meditate in the fields, he was passing by the church of San Damiano which was threatening to collapse because of extreme age. Inspired by the Spirit, he went inside to pray.

Kneeling before an image of the Crucified, he was filled with great fervor and consolation as he prayed. While his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord's cross, he heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from the cross, telling him three times: 'Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin.'

Trembling with fear, Francis was amazed at the sound of this astonishing voice, since he was alone in the church; and as he received in his heart the power of the divine words, he fell into a state of ecstasy. Returning finally to his senses, he prepared to put his whole heart into obeying the command he had received. He began zealously to repair the church materially, although the principle intention of the words referred to that Church which Christ purchased with his own blood, as the Holy Spirit afterward made him realize....”

Salió un día Francisco al campo a meditar, y al pasear junto a la iglesia de San Damián, cuya vetusta fábrica amenazaba ruina, entró en ella,



movido por el Espíritu, a hacer oración;

y mientras oraba postrado ante la imagen del Crucificado, de pronto se sintió inundado de una gran consolación espiritual. Fijó sus ojos, arrasados en lágrimas, en la cruz del Señor, y he aquí que oyó con sus oídos corporales una voz procedente de la misma cruz que le dijo tres veces: «¡Francisco, vete y repara mi casa, que, como ves, está a punto de arruinarse toda ella!»

Quedó estremecido Francisco, pues estaba solo en la iglesia, al percibir voz tan maravillosa, y, sintiendo en su corazón el poder de la palabra divina, fue arrebatado en éxtasis. Vuelto en sí, se dispone a obedecer, y concentra todo su esfuerzo en la decisión de reparar materialmente la iglesia, aunque la voz divina se refería principalmente a la reparación de la Iglesia que Cristo adquirió con su sangre.

From The Life of St. Francis (La Vida de San Francisco) by St. Bonaventure [Part 4: Praying before the Crucifix of San Damiano - La oración ante el Crucifijo de San Damián (LM 2,1)]

To my way of thinking, St. Saint Francis is a great inspiration. I teach three courses of University of St. Francis this semester and next semester. Some of the students who are forced to learn online because of our stay at home order have told me they are living a bit in fear. Some of them are worried their health and certainly some are worried about their grades. I have been trying to help them out, telling them that I will do the best I can to guide them through our current state of affairs; the

whole point of teaching the Catholic faith is to be loving, to be consoling and to teach that as long as our hearts follow what St. Paul teaches us in Colossians 3: 23-24 (that whatever we do, and word it in work, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus), then we are well on our way to the kingdom of heaven, as long as our disposition is always rooted in God's love.

For me, St. Francis is a great inspiration for living in this way. As we learn in our books of faith, St. Francis was a deacon in the Church, just like St. Stephen modeled in our First Reading. In Acts, we just read about the seven first deacons who ministered in the faith. Before I was ordained a priest, I was ordained a deacon and the words associated with the ordination rite of the deacon very much must fill guide me in the way I live my own ministry...

Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach.

Convierte en fe lo que lees
Y lo que has hecho fe viva
Enséñalo y cumple aquello que has enseñado.

If I am not living like a deacon, living a life of service, then I have no business in this ministry. At the time of offering this homily during the last ten days, I have been asked to celebrate five funerals because during that time people are in such great need to receive this grace of God during a time of trial. It is my responsibility, it is my honor, is my joy to offer God's grace in these difficult times and to live out the life of *diakonia* for those I am called to serve.

During one of those funerals, the family had special needs at the funeral that required me to celebrate an outdoor funeral Mass (the first of its kind for me!) at *The Camino y Esperanza Retreat House* in St. Anne, IL. Because the family did not want to celebrate this Mass indoors because of health concerns, we offered this Mass outdoors in one of the most beautiful venues I have ever visited. I very much believed then, as I do now, that we need to take care of people wherever they are in their journey and to make sure that they know that they are loved. The word *diakonia* means “service” and every vocation has a service component to

let God guide us and lead us so that we can serve as God has served us.

As we know, this weekend is not just dedicated to the life of clerical deacons. This weekend also focuses on the service of mothers in the United States. Normally we would celebrate Mother's Day weekend in church with a special blessing and acknowledgement of how important our mothers are in this community (in *any* community). During the Masses, I normally would distribute roses to the mothers as a sign of our respect for their service. In the world of faith, the rose is called "a kiss from God." As I have taught before, the word rosary comes from the Latin word "rosarium," meaning "a garden of prayers." Every time we plant a seed by praying an Our Father, Hail Mary or Glory Be, we are planting those seeds in that metaphorical garden.

When a mother offers her life in the spirit of the Blessed Mother, mothers become the kiss of God as well. Moms provide the heart for the family, the kiss for the family, the love the family through their example, through their strength, through their gift of service. So, we certainly want to give thanks for our moms in this online Mass. Even though I

cannot present each mom a rose online, we will purchase a bunch of roses and make sure that any mother who comes to church a Rose as a way for us to say, "thank you."

I would like to conclude this homily by offering a special blessing for moms on Mother's Day as a way of at least recognizing and giving thanks to them in this special way, who reminds us that we are not alone, and that they very much care for us by loving us in God's name, mothers who sacrifice to give life and nourishment to her children. So, we pray...

Blessing of Mothers for Mother's Day

Loving God,
As a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
So, You watch over Your Church.
Bless these women,
That they may be strengthened as Christian mothers.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
May honor them always
With a spirit of profound respect.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. **R/. Amen.**

Then the priest blesses all present

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **R/. Amen.**

Bendición de Madres durante el Día de las Madres

Dios Amoroso,
así como la madre da vida y alimento a sus hijos,
así Tú cuidas tu Iglesia.
Bendice pues estas mujeres
para que sean fortalecidas como madres Cristianas. Permite que el
ejemplo de su fe y amor sean guías resplandecientes.
Permite que nosotros, sus hijos e hijas,
siempre las honremos
con un espíritu de profundo respeto.
Te lo pedimos por Jesucristo nuestro Señor. **R/. Amén.**

Después el sacerdote bendice a todos los presentes.

Y la bendición de Dios todopoderoso, el Padre, y el Hijo, ✠ y el
Espíritu Santo descienda todos ustedes por los siglos de los siglos.
R/. Amén.

St. Patrick, St. Anne & St. Francis... *pray for us!*

This is our prayer.