

13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY B 2009

THE TWO HEALING EVENTS IN TODAY'S GOSPEL

DISCLOSE GREAT FAITH AND TRUST IN JESUS

ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS.

THE FAITH OF JAIRUS AND THE WOMAN

STAND IN STARK CONTRAST

TO THE HARDHEADED REALISM OF BOTH

THE DISCIPLES AND THE CROWD.

IT IS PRECISELY THE FAITH OF THE WOMAN AND JAIRUS

THAT ALLOWED A NEW SITUATION

WITH DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

TO BE USHERED IN BY THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

AND THE CROWD AND THE DISCIPLES WERE LEFT

“UTTERLY ASTOUNDED”.

THE WORDS,

“UTTERLY ASTOUNDED”

SEEM VERY APROPO FOR ME

AS I WANT TO REFLECT WITH YOU TODAY

MY 18 YEARS HERE AT ST. MARY.

IN THE MIDST OF THOSE ALMOST 7000 DAYS THAT I HAVE BEEN HERE

THERE ARE A FEW DAYS

AND A FEW HAPPENINGS

THAT JUST STAND OUT

AND SUMMARIZE FOR ME

OUR BEING AND WORKING TOGETHER.

WHAT COMES TO MIND FIRST, IS MY WARM WELCOME. TO ST MARY.

IT WAS JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> 1991 AND BOB DANIEL WAS TAKING ME AROUND.

WE CAME UPON A GENTLEMAN WORKING IN THE SACRISTY.

BOB SAID, "JOHN, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET OUR NEW PASTOR."

AND JOHN BREUNING LOOKED UP

FROM HIS POSITION OF KNEELING ON THE FLOOR AND SAID.

"WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN"? YOU ARE A DAY LATE!"

AND SO BEGAN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH ST. MARY.

I AM REMINDED OF THE SAYING OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WHO WROTE:

**HE HAS THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE**

**WHO HAS A HEART TO HELP.**

JOHN HAD THE HEART TO HELP

HE IS THE ONE WHO FIGURED OUT AND FIXED OUR BELLS

THAT HAD NOT TOLLED OR RANG FOR MANY YEARS.

AS I NOW WATCH JOHN USE HIS CANE

TO COME TO DAILY MASS

I THINK OF THE 100'S OF TRIPS UP THE 153 STEPS TO THE STEEPLE

THAT JOHN AND RAY SHELL MADE TO CARRIED DOWN

5 GALLON BUCKETS OF JUNK AND DEBRIS.

THIS FIRST REFLECTION OF MINE WITH JOHN

REPRESENTS SO MANY OF YOU WHO

**HAD AND HAVE THE HEART TO HELP.**

(PURIFICATOR)

DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME YOU WERE ASKED TO DONATE

YOUR NO LONGER USED LINEN TABLE CLOTHES?

THEY WERE IN TURN, CUT, HEMMED AND STITCHED

WITH A WHITE CROSS BY A HOST OF PEOPLE

AND ARE WE NOW USE WEEKLY AT EUCHARIST.

YOU DO HAVE THE HEART TO HELP.

MY SECOND REFLECTION TOOK PLACE THAT NEXT NIGHT.

I KNOW THAT I AM A WORRIER ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES

TO THE FINANCIAL ASPECT OF PASTORING A PARISH.

AND ALREADY I WAS TOSSING AND TURNING IN MY SLEEP ABOUT IT.

THAT NIGHT I GOT OUT OF BED,

KNELT DOWN AND PRAYED.

“FATHER GOD, MY WORRING ABOUT FINANCES

HAS THE ABILITY TO CONSUME ME .

AND I DO NOT WANT TO BE THIS KIND OF PASTOR.

SO IT IS NOW ALL YOURS.

I WILL HANDLE THE OTHER THINGS

YOU TAKE CARE OF FINANCES.”

I CLIMBED BACK INTO BED AND FROM THAT MOMENT

I HAVE NOT WORRIED ABOUT MONEY AGAIN!

EVERYTHING ELSE I SAID I WOULD TAKE CARE OF

IS NOT IN SUCH A GREAT SHAPE

BUT NOT FINANCES..

THERE IS A MESSAGE SOME PLACE IN THERE FOR ME!

THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIONS ARE WHAT I CALL "COINCIDENCES"

COINCIDENCE IS DEFINED AS

**"WHEN GOD WANTS TO DO SOMETHING NICE IN YOUR LIFE  
AND REMAIN ANONYMOUS"**

I DID NOT ARRIVE HERE WITH A BASKET FULL OF PLANS

OR AN AGENDA ALL WORKED OUT.

I DID KNOW THAT PEOPLE NEED TO COME TO KNOW EACH OTHER

AND SHARE AT A FAITH LEVEL

IF THEY ARE GOING TO GROW ALONG SPIRITUAL LINES

AND AT THAT TIME **CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH**

WAS THE BEST IDEA THAT I HAD EXPERIENCED

THAT HELPS PEOPLE TO GROW TOGETHER.

AND SO WE HAVE 6 OR 7 WONDERFUL YEARS TO EXPERIENCE THAT.

BUT LIKE I SAID,

MOST OF THE HAPPENINGS CAME ABOUT

WITH GOD REMAINING ANONYMOUS.

FIRST CAME THE STAIN GLASS WINDOWS.  
THERE I WAS PRAYING OVER THERE IN THAT PEW  
WHEN RUTH POLTA CAME IN  
AND WANTED TO DO SOMETHING  
FOR THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OF KEN HER HUSBAND.  
I SAID WE NEED A NEW GOSPEL BOOK  
AND RUTH SAID "OH I HAVE MUCH MORE THAN THAT TO GIVE"  
I TOOK HER INTO THE APSE AND SPOKE  
ABOUT OUR NEED TO REPAIR THE WINDOWS.  
SHE SMILED AND SAID THAT KEN ALWAYS HAD A SPECIAL LOVE  
FOR STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.  
AND SO THE PROJECT BEGAN.  
(I NOW NEED TO TELL YOU THIS NEXT PART  
BECAUSE IT IS ONE OF MY KEY REFLECTIONS  
ABOUT BEING A PASTOR)  
RAY POREMBA WAS COMMISSIONED TO DO THE REPAIRS  
AND WE STILL DID NOT KNOW THAT WE HAD STAINED GLASS.  
RAY CALLED AND SAID THAT I WOULD BE SURPRISED WITH THE QUALITY  
AND HE WANTED TO COME AT 3 O'CLOCK ON FRIDAY  
AND PUT IN A SMALL PART OF THE WINDOW TO SEE  
IF WE WANTED TO SHADE IT DARKER.  
I HAD DEACON JEFF CALL THE PEOPLE NEEDED TO BE THERE,  
ART AND ENVIRONMENT, MARK FITTHUM, AND RUTH POLTA

I WALKED FROM SCHOOL OVER TO THE CHURCH AT 3.

THE WINDOW WAS IN,

BUT THERE WAS NO ONE AROUND.

I FOUND OUT THAT RAY HAD COME EARLIER

AND ALL THE PEOPLE WERE CALLED

AND THEY CAME, AGREED WITH THE SHADING

AND GAVE RAY THE GO AHEAD

I REMEMBER THAT I HAD TWO STRONG FEELING SIMULTANEOUSLY.

ONE WAS: THEY WENT AHEAD AND MADE THE DECISIONS

WITHOUT ME THE PASTOR BEING THERE.

THE SECOND FEELING WAS:

YES, THEY CAN MAKE GREAT DECISIONS

WITHOUT ME THE PASTOR BEING THERE.

THEY HAVE COME TO KNOW

THAT THEY TOO ARE THE CHURCH

HAVING GIFTS, TALENTS, AND ALSO RESPONSIBILITY.

**THAT DAY STANDS OUT FOR ME AS A HIGHLIGHT AS PASTOR.**

OVER THE YEARS, THE OTHER PARTS OF REDOING OUR CHURCH

CAME ABOUT BY THE SAME COINCIDENCE.

ONCE THE WINDOWS WERE IN

THEY WERE HIDDEN BEHIND THE OLD WALL.

AND SO THE WORK BEGAN TO FIND A GOOD ALTERNATIVE.

5 OAK CONFESSIONALS FROM CLEVELAND

WERE TRANSFORMED INTO THIS REREDOS.

THROUGH THE SKILLS AND TALENTS OF

DON NATH, AL AND CHRIS MIELKE

SCHREINER MILL WORK.

THE PAINT IN THE CHURCH WAS PEELING BADLY

AND TUCK POINTING HAD TO BE DONE.

MARY LOU STENSON'S BEQUEST GOT THAT GOING.

AND IT TOOK 7 YEARS TO COMPLETE THE TASK.

THEN FATHER DENNY WALSH CAME.

HE SAID, I KNOW A MAN WHO PAINTS CHURCHES AS HIS MINISTRY

SO BILLY HUGHES AND HIS NEW WIFE MAUREEN

CAME AND PAINTED THIS CHURCH

FOR THE COST OF A DONATION.

ALONG WITH HIS GIFT OF EXPERT PAINTING

WE RECEIVED FROM HIM OUR STATIONS OF THE CROSS

IN NO WAY COULD WE HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS!

GOD DOES WORK THROUGH COINCIDENCES.

REMEMER HOW WE RECEIVED OUR AIR CONDITIONING.?

ONE HOT SUMMER DAY I SAID,

GEE, IF 100,000 PEOPLE GAVE \$1 WE COULD HAVE AC

IF 10,000 GAVE \$10 WE COULD HAVE AC

IF 1000 GAVE \$100 WE COULD HAVE AC

IF 100 GAVE \$1000, AND MANY OF YOU DID  
IF 10 GAVE 10,000 WE COULD HAVE AC  
AND MR DECHANT FROM AKRON, A SUMMER VISITOR,  
WALKED OUT OF CHURCH AND SAID,  
I'LL BE ONE OF THE 10.

TWO WEEKS LATER IT WAS PAID FOR.

THE POSITION OF A PRIEST IS VERY VERY UNIQUE.

IT IS LIKE BEING A MIRROR

THAT IS HELD ON A SLIGHT ANGLE

SO THAT WHEN YOU LOOK INTO IT

YOU CAN SEE PEOPLE REFLECTED BACK

THAT ARE OFF TO THE SIDE.

A PRIEST IS LIKE THAT MIRROR

BECAUSE I HAVE THE ABILITY TO REFLECT TO YOU

OTHER PARISHIONERS THAT I HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH.

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I HAVE ALWAYS SHARED WITH

THE YOUNG SEMINARIANS AND NEW PRIESTS ASSIGNED HERE

WAS THAT IN TWO MONTHS IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT

FOR THEM TO BEGIN INTRODUCING PEOPLE TO PEOPLE.

THAT IS THE REASON

FOR ALL THESE YEARS

I TAKE THE TIME FOR YOU TO GREET EACH OTHER AT MASS,

MY VISION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO HAVE PEOPLE FORM COMMUNITY!

TWO OTHER REFLECTIONS AND I WILL SIT DOWN.

IT WAS A NIGHT OR SO BEFORE CHRISTMAS

AND I WAS COMING FROM THE SCHOOL TO THE RECTORY.

AS I WALKED ACROSS THE STREET I LOOKED UP

AND SAW THE NEWLY PLACED LIGHTS

SHINNING UP ON THE CHURCH

AND I FELT AT PEACE AND RIGHT WITH THE WORLD

AND THEN CAME THIS INSIGHT.

– AND THIS TOO SHALL PASS.

LIFE CHANGES DOESN'T IT

AND WE JUST NEED TO HOLD ON WITH FAITH.

WITH BOTH HANDS

THAT WAS AN IMPORTANT INSIGHT FOR ME

AND ANOTHER ONE WAS COMING TO KNOW IN MY HEART

THE SPIRITUAL AXIOM THAT SAYS:

THAT IF THERE IS SOMETHING NEGATIVE GOING ON INSIDE ME

IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS SOMETHING IN ME

THAT IS CAUSING IT

AND NOT THE OTHER PERSON.

THAT HAS SAVED ME COUNTLESS HOURS OF USELESS INNER DEBATE.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HEART TO HELP

I HAVE BEEN BLESSED

AND I HAVE ENJOY THE RIDE

I HOPE I HAVE LEFT YOU A LITTLE BETTER

AND YOU HAVE HELPED ME GROW.

I PLAN TO TAKE 5 MONTHS OFF TO DO NOTHING

BUT TO SETTLE IN.

LATER, FR. DAVE AND I MAY TALK ABOUT

SOME KIND OF MINISTRY WITH THE ELDERLY,

MY CONTEMPORARIES.

FINALLY,

I HAVE HEARD MANY OF YOU TALK ABOUT THE CHURCH

AND HOW YOU TRULY LIKE IT.

IT IS A SPACE WORTHY TO WORSHIP IN.

ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT ANOTHER CHURCH,

ONE THAT IS ADORNED WITH BEAUTY AND TASTE.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM SAID IT THIS WAY.

When you and I come here to worship regularly

our prayers and conversation with God is a supreme good.

When we practice prayer and worship weekly

we paint our house

with the colors of modesty and humility.

Make it radiant with the light of justice

Decorate it with the finest gold leaf of good deeds

Adorn it with the walls and stones of faith and generosity  
Crown it with the steeple of prayer  
In this way you will make it a perfect dwelling place for the Lord.  
You will be able to receive him as in a special palace  
and through his grace  
you will already possess him  
for his image will be enthroned in the temple of your spirit.

MAY WE BECOME THIS KIND OF CHURCH  
AND MAY WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER  
TO ASK THAT IT HAPPEN.