

## EASTER HOMILY 2014

- I. Evil is an undeniable reality
  - a. Whether people believe in one God, many gods or are atheists
  - b. Everyone agrees there are things wrong with the world
  - c. we probably are not the perfect people we would like to be nor are all the relationship
    - i. Maybe we recognize our faults, maybe we have no clue why we are not 100% popular or are somewhere in between
  - d. Even the best friendships have their rocky aspects
  - e. Worldly solutions have been suggested such as rationalism, education, stoicism
  - f. Try to deal with evil on a grand scale but forget about the human heart
  - g. How can we expect to solve the problems of the world until individuals actually change
- II. Teaching of Jesus offers the way of love which not really new teaching, common to OT
  - a. Answer is simple: love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength
  - b. Love your neighbor as yourself
  - c. Sounds attractive and simple until we try to put this into practice
  - d. It is not easy to always put God first in our lives
  - e. Even more challenging is to love our neighbor when they make choices we do not like
  - f. Even struggle loving ourselves
  - g. Easy to fall into the thought that these are nice words but unrealistic, maybe we just have to live with evil overwhelming world
- III. God sends His Son into the world to proclaim a way out of evil and the truth of love
  - a. Jesus as He performs His ministry proclaims God's commitment to us
    - i. He asks that we put Him first in our lives above worldly leaders
    - ii. For many putting God above a country's laws or authorities is not popular
    - iii. He also challenged religious leaders, intentions of our hearts more important than religious customs or sacrifices
  - b. Jesus also challenges us as individual persons
    - i. God has a total love and forgiveness for us
    - ii. In return he asks us to strive to imitate this love and forgiveness for our neighbor
  - c. Ultimately He proclaims that God's love is powerful enough to overcome evil
- IV. Powers of the world put Jesus to the test
  - a. They appear to show the helplessness and irrelevance of God by putting Jesus to death

- b. It would appear like the perfect test to show the power of evil
- c. If Jesus called on armies or magical tricks to overcome torture and death, it would simply be another way of becoming part of the evil of the world
- d. If Jesus dies and nothing happens, then evil also wins
- e. In the crucifixion evil appears to have won, as the gospels say darkness seems to cover the land

V. Today we proclaim that Jesus has risen

- a. Sacrificial love has conquered evil, Even death itself
- b. On Good Friday Jesus endured everything evil could throw at him
- c. But he loved his people enough to say Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing
- d. In the Last Supper Jesus gave us the Eucharist so that we can join with Him
- e. In baptism and Eucharist we are sacramentally made one with Jesus
- f. We die to the evil that is within us to arise to the new life of Jesus' resurrection

VI. Whenever we receive the sacraments we are invited to join the light

- a. Jesus has brought us into His Church, made us part of his body
- b. Final step for us is to imitate Mary who said yes to the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation
- c. Jesus is inviting us to be like Him a compassionate, loving person committed to God
- d. God always respects our freedom, even as he transforms us into his body,
- e. we can choose to live as newly risen people, a loving and forgiving people
- f. or we can give into the enticements of the world choosing the way of selfishness and evil

VII. With our human weakness we often fall back into the darkness,

- a. The promise of Easter is that the light of Jesus is always there for us
- b. God is always waiting for us, ready to welcome back into the light.