

Fr Danny's Homily

8-4-18

18th Sunday in Ordinary time

Today is our first opportunity to celebrate the Mass here at St Robert Bellarmine in Spanish. So, you may be asking yourself, why is Father speaking in English? We're going to try something new here at the parish for the first six months to see how this is going to work. We've seen in many Catholic churches throughout the US and here in Oklahoma, that when we begin a Mass in Spanish, we get a division into two communities: those that speak English and those that speak Spanish. We don't want that division here, we want to remember that we are one community of faith united around the Eucharist that we are here to celebrate. And so, by allowing our Masses to be in different languages, but the homily to unite us, we're trying that out to see how that works.

Plus, I've come to understand that even though the prayer language for many of our immigrant population here from Mexico and other Latin American countries is Spanish, the vast majority of everyone here tonight can understand at least a little bit of English. More or less? I'm getting a couple of nods, good. But also, we're going to be recording the homilies and having a translation in Spanish and in English on our website by Wednesday of next week. So, if for some reason you don't understand a word of what I'm saying now, you can read it on the website over the coming week.

In today's readings we're hearing so much about the bread that comes from heaven. In the first reading we hear from the book of Exodus that the Israelite people were upset with God. They had finally been released from slavery but then they'd been led to this desert where they were wandering. Where they have no food, nothing to drink. And they begin to grumble at God and say, God, why is it that You would free us from slavery where we at least were fed everyday and had roofs over our heads, to bring us into this desert where we have nothing to eat, nothing to drink, no hope and no shelter? And so Moses then brings those concerns to God and says, Lord, they're grumbling again. They didn't get quite what they wanted, again, can you help them out? And the Lord says Yes! In the

mornings I will rain down manna from heaven, the food of the angels, to feed the Israelite people. And in the evenings, birds of the air will come, pigeons will come. So they can have meat in the evenings, and in the mornings they can have the dew from the ground, that manna, that bread from heaven, to eat and to have their fill.

Then we have today's Gospel, the beginning of the chapter 6 of the Gospel of John which we will hear over the next 4-5 weeks, where Jesus contests with the Pharisees, where He says, I am the living bread that came from heaven. When the Israelite people wandered through the desert, they received food and were fed and they were nourished, but then they were hungry again. They weren't given what they needed for everlasting life. But Jesus promises that He is the true bread that came down from heaven that He is the bread that can lead us to eternal life. That He is that nourishment that nothing on earth can satisfy except for His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

That same thing that we come here for each week, week in and week out, to celebrate gathered together as a community of faith: sometimes grumbling like the Israelites did, that our lives aren't going quite as we wanted them to. And so we bring our concerns into the church. We love each other as we come together as a community of faith. But then we lay down our petitions at the foot of the altar.

At this altar of sacrifice that Jesus, every time that we come here, brings us back to that moment when He looked at us, He saw us from the Cross, and He said You are my beloved son and daughter, for you I bear this price. My flesh is the life of the world. There's nothing more loving to do, as Jesus tells us, than to lay down your life for your friends. That's what we're here to celebrate. The life of the One who came down from heaven for you and for me for the potentiality, for the possibility of us to go to heaven. That's what we're here to celebrate.

But we live in a world today that has violence everywhere. We live in a world today that doesn't want us to love. We live in a world today that calls us a Christian nation, and Mexico a Catholic nation. But Mexico today, (I know because I just came back from there), is as Catholic as Jerusalem is Jewish. Sometimes in name only because the churches are just as empty today in Mexico, as the synagogues are in Jerusalem.

We have lost our faith, our brothers and sisters! We have forgotten the promise that Jesus gave to us that He would leave us the Holy Spirit as the guide that we need when we come up to difficult realities in life. To offer us hope. Right now in our world we don't see hope, we don't see mercy. We see violence, we see danger, we see death, we see destruction. That does not mean that the Lord has abandoned us, my brothers and sisters. It means, though, that we have chosen not to be His hands and His feet.

Because when God created us, He created us out of His love to nurture one another, to feed one another, to clothe one another to give from what we have been given, to each other. Not just the material things that we been given, but also the love that God has for each and every one of us. That above all else is what He's calling us to share.

So as we gather around this table, as we come together as a community of faith, may we be inspired by the love of God. May we be witnesses to all the great things that He can do in our world. And may we take the opportunity that He gives each and every one of us today to help our neighbor, to feed our neighbor, and to love our enemy and all of those who God has created in His image and likeness.