

Homily  
May 12, 2024  
The Ascension of the Lord  
25:35 – 34:40

Albert (to Mr. Radomski), when you drop your children off at school, what do you say as they get out of the car? (Response) “Have a good day.” (To Mike Schenkenfelder) What did you used to say to your children? (Response) “Love you.” (To Jeff Williams) What did you say? (Response) “Get in there, you’re late.” (Laughter) Ah, tardiness...it’s become an epidemic since COVID.

Anything else? What did you say? “Be good.” You hoped. That’s what you said. “Play like a champion.”

There are many ways when we’re parting company that we say something either encouraging, hope-filled, loving. We want people to do well. Especially our children. And so we give them something in part.

The one thing none of you said was, “Work hard at studying.” Well, that’s a mission.

So, we give them mission. We give them hope. We tell them, “You are loved.” All of these things, they’re very, very important.

In 1992, Martin, my father and the father of all seven Ginther children fell suddenly ill with pneumonia. We were all called to Moline, Illinois, because the doctor said, “He’s not going to survive it this time.” They gave us this very large hospital room with only his bed in it. I guess they knew there were going to be a passel of us coming.

And as we were there in the room with Mother and Dad, Dad decided he wanted to see each one of us individually. And he spoke something to us that was special for each of us. But he also said something that we later discovered, he’d said two things to all of us. “Take care of your mother.” And, “Get along.”

Dad had taken care of Mother for 55 ½ years. And we had seen him do it. He'd shown us the way. Getting along was one of his mantras at home. "Now children, get along." That was in part to take care of Mother because she didn't like conflict. But at the same time, he wanted us to enjoy each other for the rest of our lives. He gave us a mission.

For the next 16 years, we took care of mother, with the help of the Little Sisters of the Poor. And to this day - you know about Siblings Weekend - we get along. For as long as we can stand each other's company, of course.

He gave us hope. He gave us a focus for our love. He set us on mission.

Now, why do I bring this up - This sense of hope, this sense of mission, this sense of knowing we are loved? Because this is what Jesus did in the First Reading and the Gospel. Before he ascended, he instructed them. He shared with the disciples continual understanding, especially the Scriptures, to help interpret his Resurrection and his leaving.

He gave them hope by promising that he would always be with them. (That's in Matthew's Gospel.) We heard Mark. "I will be with you always until the end of time." He gave them a sense of purpose and mission. "Now take what you have seen and heard and come to know and take it to the world."

Take it to the world.

He gave them a mission even as he was saying good-bye.

You're on mission, Tucker. Not just because your wife told you to be. But you are on mission, right? When did this begin? (Response) "As soon as I could understand." As soon as you could understand. The root was your baptism. Just like all of us.

And we have been on mission ever since. But all that we do every day in word, in action, everything is to be found rooted in that call. “Go.” Go out and live what you’ve been given. Go out and live the Gospel. Go out and proclaim what you’ve seen and heard.

Have you embraced your mission – our mission? Some days yes. Some days not-so-much. Why? We get distracted. We get discouraged. We can’t receive the hope that’s there. We don’t recognize the love that is there. And sometimes we even lose a sense of “is it worth it at all.”

But then we come back here. And when we come back here, what do we hear? The word, the actions, the encouragement, the love of God in Christ Jesus, the hope that he calls us to and offers us. And at the end of Mass, every time, (well, except Holy Thursday) what does Deacon Tom or I say at the very end? Sally. (Response) “Go in Peace.” Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

That’s the mission. It’s rooted here. Every time, “Go!” Take what you have heard and seen and experienced and go out there.

Now, there was a Second Reading that we could have used, but we chose the other one. But the other one we didn’t choose, obviously I’m going to say something about. Why? Because we made the choice a long time ago.

The other reading from Ephesians talked about that some are prophets, some are teachers, some are preachers, etc. We may not see ourselves as any of those things. But are we not sent with what we have and who we are in this time and this place? Every one of us.

So, at the end of Mass today once again we’re going to be sent on mission. May we embrace the mission. And live it in a very special way on this Mother’s Day. But live it each day for the Lord who loves us and gives us hope that he is with us.