



Homily for
THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
23/24 January, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

I. Back in the early days of my priesthood, when I was teaching full time, there came a time when I began to feel like I wasn't "doing enough." Even though I was teaching and I loved teaching...and I understood that teaching itself was "doing something," I felt like I spent a lot of time and energy teaching and preaching – but was I really living it myself? I felt a disconnect between all of the lofty things I was teaching and putting it into practice in my life.

So I began to look around for a way to close this gap and I came across an organization that sponsors children in mission countries. I decided to sign up and sponsor a child. I recall when I received the first mailing and read about the child I would be sponsoring, I was overcome with emotion. I think it was because I had crossed over some sort of line from theory and theology to a very practical, lived application of all that I had been teaching. Finally, I was walking the talk.

II. So often we gather together at Mass and listen to the word of God proclaimed. We listen to homilies. We read commentary about the word of God or Church

teaching in the bulletin or Catholic publications. But how often, in what ways, does that word of God take on flesh in our daily, lived experience?

The context of both the first reading and the gospel selection from the gospel of Luke is a liturgical assembly – in fact, it is a Liturgy of the Word.

In the first reading the Jewish people have returned home from Exile. They have been rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. One day Ezra, the priest, gathered the people together and read the law of the Lord to them. It may be they had grown unfamiliar with the law and needed to hear it again. They, too, became emotional – and wept – at hearing the word of God. They responded, Amen! Amen! – indicating their acceptance of the word of God.

And in the gospel Jesus is in the synagogue in his hometown. One day he gets up to read and selects a passage from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” And then he says today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.

He could have just finished the reading and sat down, he could have given some kind of commentary on the reading, he could have given a homily about Moses and how great he was. But instead, Jesus says today this passage is fulfilled in your hearing. In other words, today, now, the message of this reading needs to become a reality among us. The rubber needs to hit the road.

III. Jesus is trying to push beyond just hearing the word proclaimed in the synagogue to actually living it out in daily life.

Every once-in-awhile I hear someone, usually a grandchild, remark about an older person who is “really a devote Catholic.” They admire this person’s dedication and depth of faith. Regardless of any scandal in the Church, trouble in the world, personal tragedies and family struggles, this person just hangs in there, through thick and thin, year in and year out – for decades. At some point, the teachings and the message of scripture must have taken root in their heart and they have actually lived it.

IV. Has that word – that word we listen to Sunday after Sunday after Sunday – become a lived reality in your life? Have you crossed that line from lots of nice ideas and good thoughts to concrete, specific actions in your life.

In a few moments we will baptize (4:00 – Grayson Joel Krier/11:00 – Liam David Kelleher). This is the first sacrament – a sacrament of grace in which God’s presence is placed in his heart in a new way. It is a seed of grace planted. Through the guidance of his parents, godparents, family and whole Christian community, that seed is to be nourished, brought to growth, enabled to one day produce an abundant harvest. Through our support and witness Grayson’s/ Liam’s faith can be brought from dormancy and inaction to a lived reality as a vibrant disciple of Jesus. This is the goal of baptism.

Jesus proclaims a kind of mandate for his mission – to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, to free the oppressed, to give sight to the blind, to proclaim a year of favor.

Pope Francis has proclaimed that year of favor – the Year of Mercy – during which we are to bring God’s mercy to an ailing world. The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are primary ways by which we can do that.

This past week now, we have been called to an awareness of living the corporal work of mercy: to give drink to the thirsty. What did you do to practice this corporal work of mercy? Or was it just something you read about in the bulletin or Father talked about in church? Or was there some way – big or small – by which you actually gave drink to the thirsty?

V. In his writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul teaches us that the Christian community is like a body – a human body in which each part is important: visible or invisible, large or small – each part of the body is important for the proper functioning of the whole body.

Each of us is important: regardless of our abilities, our skills or talents – each of us is necessary and important. We need each other. Care for the body of Christ – especially those who are most weak and vulnerable –

will not happen unless we cross that line and allow the theory to pass from our minds to our heart to our hands and to our feet.

Amen! Amen! May it be so!

Fr. Kyle's homily follows....

“Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing”. So is this all we need to do? We just come to church, hear the scriptures and that is it? What does Jesus mean the scripture is fulfilled in our hearing?

- Perhaps it is like when I was younger and my mom would ask me to do something. My mother would say, “Kyle, stop playing video games and clean your room”. I would respond, “Yah, yah Ma, I hear ya”. Is this how we “listen” to scripture at mass? Is this how we “listen” to God speaking to us in our lives?

- When I was just getting ready to start my first day of kindergarten, I was pretty nervous. My dad told me I only need to remember one thing. “Listen to what the teacher says, and do what the teacher says”. Notice he didn't say these were two things. Because if we are to truly listen or hear the word of God, it must move us to action; to do something; to change our lives.

This is what Jesus means in the Synagogue when he says that the scripture is fulfilled in our hearing. Not that we have merely been able to drag ourselves out of bed in the morning to get to mass (although that is an impressive thing nonetheless). But rather the scripture is fulfilled what we listen to what Jesus says, and do what Jesus says.

Perhaps in today's gospel people would have expected Jesus to give something like a homily. But he didn't, because he knows the scripture is truly fulfilled when they have listened to and done what God has said. Likewise, I could read scripture to you all morning and preach to you all afternoon (wouldn't you like that?). I could talk about Jesus until I am blue in the face but unless we truly listen to what Jesus says and do what he says, it doesn't make any difference.

The scripture dies the moment it hits our ears unless we do something with it when we leave the doors of this church.

Jesus is our teacher, leading us to a life of love and happiness. May we have the courage to listen to what our teacher says, and do what he says.