

Homily for the Second Sunday of Easter

I hope all of you had a very blessed and enjoyable Easter Sunday. I know I enjoyed some time with my family that day. I have to tell you a cute little joke too. My goddaughter, who is my cousin's child, went to Mass with her mom on Easter. She came up in the line for Holy Communion with her mom, and just after her mom had received and gone back to her pew, little Sydney said, "Mommy, I want a chip too." So, it's chips being given out for Eucharist this week! Now, of course we know better – the Eucharist isn't some chip. It's the very Body and Blood of our resurrected Lord Jesus, present under these symbols of bread and wine. But sometimes people misunderstand our precious faith.

Or take the conversation I had with a college student some years ago about the faith. Now, I always try to take everyone where they're at with regards to these important subjects – we're all at different points on the journey after all! Well, as we were talking about all the great ways the Church has benefitted society with schools and hospitals and the like, we started talking a little about Jesus. And this person said: I really admire all the good things the Catholic Church has done for others, but I just really don't believe that some guy could come down from heaven and do all those things he was supposed to have done.

I must admit, it caught me off guard for a second. But, at the same time, I valued the fact that he was being so bluntly honest with me. Many times people will avoid being so forth-coming with a priest. But after some reflection on this experience, I thought to myself: “Here is another example of someone misunderstanding our Catholic faith.” In fact, the reason behind why we do all these good things like found hospitals, and run schools, and bring food and drink to the destitute in far-away lands and here in our own country, is because of Jesus.

The early Church understood this well, as we hear in our first reading today from the Book of Acts: “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...” Now, this isn’t some type of communism, where people are forced to share the lowest common denominator of material goods. Rather, it’s out of the overflowing love for an all-loving God that they shared, not only the physical things they’d been blessed with, but also the spiritual gifts – things like mercy, forgiveness, and peace. Imagine what a radical witness this was then, and what it can be in our world today. Living in the midst of individualistic, often selfish society, believers in Christ are called to be self-giving, just as He Himself was to death.

All of this comes back to faith in Jesus. As Christians, we're not simply do-gooders or a spiritual social service agency. Rather, it's because God has been so giving and kind and loving to us, so we are called to be to one another – in ways big and small, in huge charitable agencies and in daily living at home, at work, or in school.

It's also because of this that we have such wonderful ministries and organizations here at our parish. These are not just groups to keep people busy at church. They're not just about getting involved in doing things just because they have to be done anyway. But rather, our parish ministries and organizations are about putting our faith in Jesus into practice by living it out in the life of the Church. These groups are one way to “put flesh” on our faith by what we say and do for others. It's about helping our parish family to grow.

As so, as you may know, next weekend after each Mass, the Ministry Fair will take place downstairs in the social hall. We invite you to learn about the various ways that you can be more fully involved in the life of our parish family. Or, you can just come to see all the wonderful things going on here at IHM. And don't forget the good food and a festive atmosphere!

To prepare for Ministry Fair, you're invited to review the list of all the ministries and organizations found in our updated "Parish Pastoral Booklet" and take one of the "Talent & Ministry" forms, both found on the ledges behind the last pews, or available on our parish website.

Then, the weekend after the Ministry Fair, we'll observe "Participation Sunday", when you'll be invited to fill out those Talent & Ministry forms after the homily, and then return them in the "2nd collection". You'll be contacted shortly afterwards by the coordinators of the group(s) you selected to provide you with further information, or to welcome you to that particular ministry or organization. I'm really looking forward to our Ministry Fair next weekend, and I hope you'll join me too! God bless you.