

HOMILY ~ THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER APRIL 30/MAY 1, 2022

How many of you trust things that you know and are familiar with even when you are not positive they are working properly? I think we do it all of the time and I want to give you an example of something I think we can all agree on, traffic lights. I think we all know that when you get to an intersection, and the light in front of you is green, you can proceed because the lights to the right and left of you in the intersection are red. You know this because of what you know of how traffic lights are supposed to work, but you really do not know for sure. To know for sure, you would have to stop at the green light, get out of your car, walk across the intersection to look to see if the light is red, and then get in your car and go. But probably by the time you get back in your car, the light may have changed, and you would be back where you started. You also know that the light is red because people are stopping. Most people know about traffic lights and trust them and behave the way they should. But do traffic lights ever malfunction? Yes. And do people sometimes run the red lights? Yes. So based upon what you know about traffic lights, you trust them even though you do not know for sure that they are working properly and you do not know for sure that people will behave the way they are supposed to behave. I think that is what faith in Jesus is like. Faith in Jesus involves trusting in him based upon what you know about who he is, even though you are not absolutely sure of how he will work in your life or how other people will respond to him. And this is a journey. Learning more and more about him and then coming to trust him more.

In the readings during the season of Easter we hear about the spiritual journey of the early disciples. The Jewish people knew God and trusted in him because of the way he had always taken care of them. They were waiting for the Messiah and then here comes Jesus. Then, some of the disciples got to know Jesus personally, came to believe that he is the Messiah, and came to trust him even though they were not sure what he was going to do. Then he suffered and died on the cross. He was not behaving the way they expected the Messiah to behave. Their faith was weak at that time, but they held on together. Then they found out that Jesus was raised from the dead, but they did not know what this meant in their lives and maybe they were not sure if they trusted Jesus anymore because he was not going to be with them in

the same way. In the Gospel reading today, Jesus had already appeared to the disciples twice. But they still did not recognize him at first. Seven of them were fishing together. Seven experienced fishermen were fishing all night and caught nothing. With the help of Jesus they caught more fish than they could drag in. They never lost their faith in Jesus. They were staying together to try and figure it out. Jesus made it very clear that if they loved him they would have to love and serve one another. Were they going to trust him and do that, not knowing exactly what would happen?

That is what our faith journey is like. Faith in Jesus involves trusting in him based upon what you know about who he is, even though you are not absolutely sure of how he will work in your life or how other people will respond to him. You know Jesus based upon Sacred Scripture, what you have read about him, what others have told you about him, and how you have experienced him in your life. If we were absolutely sure of how Jesus would work in our lives we would not need faith. We have come to know that God created this whole world just for us to live in. In spite of all of the negative things we have done to the environment, God has pretty much sustained it. We know that God sustains our lives every minute of the day and in spite of all of the things that can go wrong without bodies, we are pretty healthy all of the time. God helps us work through all kinds of things, even the things that seem to be impossible at first. And then things happen, wars, pandemics, illnesses, death, and we are not sure where Jesus is in all of that. How could God let this happen? That is when we can lose our faith. That is when our faith is weak. Knowing God, Jesus the way that we know him are we going to continue to trust in him even when we are not sure how he is going to act in these situations? In these times we have to fake it until we make it. Continue to pray. Continue to come to Church. Continue to join the Catholic community of believers. Millions and millions of people have had faith in Jesus over the years. Could they all be wrong? Can you continue to trust in Jesus even if you are not sure how he will work through these difficulties? If you can trust in traffic lights, you can certainly trust in Jesus. Sometimes we just have to fake it until we make it.

Love & Peace,
Fr. Jim