

HOMILY ~ FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 6-7, 2023

On a stormy night, a businessman boards a plane and takes a middle seat between a middle-aged woman sitting at the window and a little girl sitting on the aisle. After the flight took off, he began a conversation with the little girl, who appeared to be the same age as his daughter. He found it strange that such a young girl would be traveling alone, but he kept his thoughts to himself.

About an hour into the flight, the plane was suddenly jolted by extreme turbulence. The pilot came over the PA system and told everyone to fasten their seat belts as they had encountered rough weather. Several times over the next half hour, the plane made drastic dips and turns, shaking all the while. Some people began crying, and many—like the woman sitting by the window—were praying intently.

The businessman was sweating and clenching his seat as tightly as he could. Meanwhile, the little girl sat quietly in her seat with her hands resting calmly on her legs. Incredibly, she did not seem worried at all.

Suddenly the turbulence ended. The pilot came on to apologize for the bumpy ride and announced that they would be landing soon. As the plane began its descent, the man said to the little girl, ***“You are just a little girl, but I have never met a braver person in all my life! Tell me, dear, how is it you remained so calm while all of the adults were so afraid?”***

Looking him in the eyes, she said, ***“My father is the pilot, and he is taking me home.”***

In our Gospel today, Jesus is telling the Disciples that he is going to his Father; and he will prepare a dwelling place in the Kingdom of God for them! He is going to come and take them home. However, do you think the Disciples feel the same trust as the little girl in the airplane?

Our Gospel scene is in the upper room, Jesus and his Disciples are celebrating the Last Supper. The lives of the Disciples are topsy turvy! Everything is going wrong. Judas has just gone off to betray Jesus; the Jewish leaders are out to get Jesus and his followers and get rid of them all! Jesus has just told Peter that he will deny Jesus three times in the next 24 hours. But the real kicker is that Jesus has just told them that he will be leaving them! Their whole world, as they know it, is about to collapse; they are confused, worried, anxious and AFRAID! Then there is Jesus, knowing what is awaiting him, the horrible death that awaits, yet he is more concerned about his friends, the Disciples. He spoke words of encouragement, ***“Do not let your hearts be troubled, you trust God, now trust***

Me.” He told them that he was going to prepare a place for them and come back and take them with Him. Basically, he is saying to them, “**STOP WORRYING....Trust Me!**” These words were meant to bring the Disciples peace, because the basis of peace is what? ... TRUST! Without trust, there is no peace.

We place our trust in many people every day: teachers, family, doctors, our employers, priests and deacons. Sometimes they let us down; but if we trust them, then how much more should we trust Jesus?

It is easy to trust Jesus when things are going good, it is a lot harder to when things are going bad? Because when we are hit with trouble after trouble, when we are hurting, when we are anxious about what lies ahead, when we cannot see a way for things to get better, we may begin to question, “**Where is Jesus in all this? Can I trust him to help get me through this?**”

Friends, every one of us here is either coming out of a troubling situation, is IN a troubling situation or will soon be in a troubling situation. There is no avoiding it! When trouble comes, Jesus asks: “**Do you trust Me?**” When He asks this, he does not mean we should sit back and he will take care of everything. We must do our part, too. There is a verse from the Book of Proverbs that says, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and he will direct your paths.**” How will he do this? Well, we should not expect an e-mail or text message; we need to pray, pray and pray some more, hopefully doing more listening and less talking, so we can hear Jesus speak to us.

You know, it is easy to get up here and tell you, “**Don’t worry, have faith, trust God, trust Jesus, everything will be okay.**” Folks, it is easier to preach it than to practice it! I struggle with trusting Jesus as much as anyone else does. During those times, I look at a crucifix and remind myself who is asking for my trust. I see those open arms and think back to the times when my nieces and nephews were young and would jump up and down on the bed screaming “**Catch me, Uncle Don ... Catch me!**” I would hold out my arms, and they would jump into them. They jumped because they trusted me. They knew how much I loved them and that I would catch them.

My brothers and sisters, who better for you and me to trust than the one who accepted the pain and suffering of the cross to show us how much He loves us? My prayer for all of us is that we will never be afraid to take that leap into the loving arms of Jesus. Trusting that those arms he opened so wide for us on the cross will always be there to catch us!

Peace,

Deacon Don