

# HOMILY ~ TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## JUNE 8/9, 2024

One time, I was driving my car to the store and there was a good song on the radio. I don't really remember what song it was; but I know it was the 80's channel, the music of my youth. As I often do when listening to a good song, I had the radio turned up all the way to 11. Also, because it was a nice day, I had the windows down and the air on! When I got to the store, I pulled into an open parking space and decided to finish listening to the song. When the song was over, I got out of my car and to my horror I realized, with some embarrassment, that a young woman had been in the car next to me with her windows down and could not help but hear my loud music. I may have even been singing along. Embarrassed, I apologized about all the noise. *"No problem, sir,"* she replied, *"I love Oldies music, too."*

What? Oldies music? I don't listen to Oldies music! But then I realized some of the music on the 80's channel is almost 40 years old now, which makes it about twice as old as true Oldies music was at the time I was making fun of my parents for listening to it. I may not be listening to Oldies music, but I am listening to old people music. That is just crazy to me.

I get more and more reminders every day that I am getting older; and to be honest, it is starting to bother me a little bit. I was mowing the lawn on a hot day, so I took my shirt off. A few minutes later, my wife, Gail, came running out of the house, faster than I have ever seen her run before. She threw a shirt over my head so quickly you would have thought I was on fire. I asked her why and she said, **"You have to wear a shirt outside."** I said the guy down the street is mowing his lawn, and he doesn't have a shirt on. She said, **"He's 30, and he obviously works out."** I am not sure what she would have done to me if we were like Adam and Eve in today's First Reading in the Garden of Eden.

The truth is we all get older. When you get older, you lose your hair, your sight, your hearing, your strength, your speed, your stamina, and even your mind. In return, these things get replaced with aches, pains and illnesses. My AARP Magazine is filled with articles about aging gracefully and how to keep bad things from happening to my body, but they are not really working for me. But today's Second Reading is what really puts aging into perspective for me.

In today's Second Reading, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, **"Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."** In his letter, Paul is telling the Corinthians directly about his adversity, his suffering and his fragility. I think in some ways Paul is feeling a little old. But Paul reminds the Corinthians (and us) that our outer selves, our physical bodies and all those things that perish are not what are important, but our inner selves, our souls and those things that are eternal are truly what are important.

By our house, there is a Planet Fitness; and the parking lot is always full. I often think about how many people are there and how much time they spend working out. Think for a moment about how much time we all spend on our bodies (working out and eating right) and our outward appearance (bathing, doing our hair, applying makeup, getting our nails done). There is nothing wrong with being healthy and looking good; and it is good to be clean. In fact, these things make us feel good physically, mentally and emotionally and help us to live long and healthy lives. But St. Paul would remind us that what is truly important are our souls and our eternity. Paul wants us to look at the time we spend on our outer selves and compare it to the time we spend on our inner selves. I am sure that some of those at Planet Fitness spend little or no time on their souls; and most of us, including myself, probably do not spend as much time on our inner selves as we should be.

Our true beauty comes from within anyway. It is like those advertisements where they show before and after pictures: someone heavy and then after they have lost a hundred pounds, a man who is bald and then with a full head of hair, a person with wrinkles and then after botox has smoothed out their wrinkles. The real difference in these pictures is not the weight, the amount of hair or the wrinkles. The true difference is that in the “before” picture they are shown very sad and miserable; but in the “after” picture, they are smiling and happy. Their inner self is shining through. I kind of think the results would be different, for example, if they showed the bald “before” picture with the man happy and smiling and the full head of hair “after” picture with the man sad and frowning. The true difference is not the hair but the smiling. Those beautiful Hollywood stars don’t look so beautiful in their mug shots, do they? Their inner self is not shining through the pain and the sadness.

I think that it is very important for us spiritually to recognize that no matter what we do, the longer we live, the more broken our bodies are going to become. Our bodies do not stay perfect forever, no matter how hard we work out. Yet our inner selves can improve continuously and indefinitely; and no matter how many days pass by, our souls remain eternal. St. Paul says in today’s Second Reading, “**Look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.**” Our inner self is eternal. No matter how long we live, our souls remain intact. We need to keep that in mind when we think about what is important to us, and what is important to God. God’s first concern is our inner selves and that is where our concern should be.

When I was in the Deacon Formation Program, I was assigned to Angela Hospice as a Spiritual Care Minister. It was my responsibility to visit people on the campus, pray with them and give them the Eucharist. I always looked forward to my days there as it was always good to make someone laugh who was going through some bad times. Then one day my Director told me she wanted me to meet with one of the Sisters who was unexpectedly in the hospice and who had just been told she had not long to live. As I made my way down the hall to her room, I expected the worst visit of my time at the facility; but when I got there, I found something completely different. Sister was laughing and joking with the people who visited her. She was full of joy and at peace. She was not sad at all. I asked how she could be this way knowing her diagnosis, and she said that she was just doing God’s will for her life as she always did. That is where our joy is – **doing God’s will.**

I usually preach, as do most Priests and Deacons, on the Gospel Reading, but today’s reading is a difficult one. Jesus’ family is calling him crazy, the scribes are saying he is possessed by a demon and Jesus is told that his mother is outside and, for some reason, he seems to leave her outside without letting her in. But the last part of the reading is very important. Our Lord says, “**For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.**” God has a unique plan for each one our lives, the plan even changes as we get older; but all our plans have the same ending, to be a part of the family of God for all of eternity. That is where our joy is. That is where our bodies will be restored and never waste away.

That is where we will rejoice and be glad!

Peace,  
Deacon Don