

## Homily for 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

People often ask me where do I find stories for my sermons. The truth be known, my best source come from real life. Take for instance, this true story.

Last week a woman told her neighbor that she was thinking of attending our Holy Saturday Vigil Mass. The neighbor (a member of our parish) responded by saying: “Oh, you might not want to do that. The Parish choir has become so good, the parish is charging \$10 a ticket to get into the service.”

Now as strange as you might find this, there is a logical answer. You remember that for the last few weeks there has been an announcement in the bulletin concerning a concert with Dan Schutte. The announcement reads that the cost of the ticket is \$10.00. I realize that it is a long stretch from a Dan Schutte Concert to Holy Saturday...but somebody made it

This is not so much a good story for a sermon as it is a good example of how misconceptions are often based on rumors and false assumptions.

This came into sharp focus for me when I received a letter in the middle of March from a parishioner who was upset over the Faith

Forward campaign. As I read this very intelligent and well put-together letter, I reached over for the phone and called the individual. I invited the person to come and chat with me. They did and it was a wonderful conversation. I was delighted that rather than live with misconceptions, the person came directly to me. After our conversation I agreed to make some public comments about our Faith Forward campaign.

Apparently, some people think that we have done away with Catholic Charity this year. That's not true. What we have done is combined it with our own fund raising campaign. We will simply take \$106,000 from the top of the funds raised by the campaign and put them towards the Annual Catholic Charity Appeal. We have always reached our goal and I have no doubt that we will do it again this year. It is just that the method will be different.

There seems to be confusion over the nature of our school. Some of this stems from the word "Regional" in the title of the school. To begin with, this is a parish school -- this is our school. We did not transplant CJCR onto our parish property. We built a parish school. The word "regional" is part of the title because it ensures bus transportation. But without a doubt, **this is our school** with 63% of the school enrollment coming from our parish, which is 33% more than when it was a CJCR.

Should we be supporting a school that is used by a relatively small group of students affecting an even smaller group of families? Here is a complex question. To begin with, please remember that the families of the school are paying off the \$6.5M bank loan. They do that through their tuition payments, which are 30% higher than the average school in the Diocese. They have accepted the burden of that loan. And I am most grateful to them.

But more important is the real truth that our school is not used by a relatively small group of students. Our school is used by the parish as a whole. Religious Education classes, youth ministry, sports programs, adult education programs, parish dinners, summer camp for any child in our parish....and the list gets longer with every passing month.

In this Easter Season we reflect on the disciples cowering in an upper room, afraid of the people outside and what they would do to them. Can you imagine how different our world would be if those disciples had refused to leave that upper room. Imagine if they had said, "I'll keep this to myself."

Everything about Catholic Education and our school is wrapped up in the mystery of Easter and that upper room. Just as the disciples were gathered together and sent out to proclaim the mystery and the power of God's love, so the children of our school are being prepared to share that

same love and same belief in God. You heard it here a few weeks when two of our students spoke to you...shared their faith with you and asked for your support. And I stand before you and continue to ask for your help.

It is easy to stay in the upper room. It is easy to say: "Those who choose to educate in Christ should also bear the cost alone." It is easy to say, "I have no children in that school it's not my responsibility." It's easy to say "I pay taxes for Public schools already...it's not my problem."

So why do we need to support this: the answer is easy. We need to support this because we are all called to share and spread the message of the Gospel not just on Sunday in Church but also when the school bell rings on Monday. We need Christ's message guiding what we teach in every subject. We need our children empowered by Christ so that they can become faithful witnesses and responsible citizens. We need schools where Faith is protected and nourished.

Our school is the vision of Fr. Meadows, Monsignor Murray and Monsignor Cerrito brought to completion. But it needs your help and your support. This campaign is so much more than raising money. This campaign is about carrying on the work that began on the first Easter morning. I ask you to be open, to be prayerful and to be generous. I need your help. I can't do this alone. This campaign is about moving our Faith

Forward because OUR faith doesn't end in a tomb with a stone rolled over its entrance. Rather our faith is found in moving forward, in sharing our faith and ensuring our future.