

Homily for 5th Sunday of Easter

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The elderly man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table.

But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. As Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonition when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child: “What are you making?”

The little boy responded, “Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up.” Then he smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Tears started to stream down their cheeks. They said nothing. They didn’t have to.

That evening the husband took Grandfather’s hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

The second reading today mentions the word “new” several times: a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem.” Indeed, all things are being made new. And the key to this new heaven and new earth is what Jesus describes as his new commandment...the command to “love one another.”

But that command to “love one another” is not lived out in great deeds. Rather it is lived out in the small and everyday events in our

lives. It is lived out in the compassion, the understanding, the forgiveness and the patience that we extend to each other. It is lived out in how we love each other in our homes, our work place, our schools, our neighborhoods and with all those we encounter in our lives. It is lived out in the hand that reaches out and brings each of us, all of us, to the table of God's unending love.