

St Pius & St Anthony Homily 5th Sunday Easter Year C

When I was a kid summer-time meant being outdoors all the time, and for me, in Owensboro right by our home was a big local park only a block away, so that meant the park was our second home. The park had bike paths, all the fun playground stuff, like swings, see-saws, monkey bars, and even slides. There were two different playground areas one for big persons and then another one for little persons. (Sometimes we big kids loved the little kids section better because it had those animals you sat on and rode (they were welded onto huge metal springs set in concrete to allow you to swing back and forth on them). But their section also had these curved balance beams to walk (but we jostled each other off of them), and a jungle gym metal cage you were supposed to climb on, but we used it like a King of Hill Competition, and then kept trapped down under the wires like a jail for whoever fell off inside it). Yet, in summer the park became even more fun as the Parks Department added extra programs/activities with live counselors that brought extra equipment & games (box hockey, Frisbees, horseshoes, mitts & balls for pickle etc). I mention all this, because with this item away from home, it also meant that every summer, mom would give us a primer lesson again on keeping track of time. She would tell us to ask seniors in the park (who were always sitting around on benches or walking) what time it was? She taught us to ask nicely and be sure to thank them. *'Sir, or Mam, could you please tell me what time it is?'* She emphasized courtesy and gratitude. ***Yet, what I learned most of all though was this: By the time we thought to ask someone what time it was, that usually meant, we were already late.*** If I had to ask, count on it, it was time! Get home! Well, our gospel has a 'times up' moment for us. Jesus announces, "**NOW** (at this time), is the Son of Man glorified". This is a major time change in Jesus' ministry. A little background on John's gospel may help here: Bible scholars like to break down John's Gospel into two books: one called the 1) Book of Signs, and the other 2) Book of Glory. And the dividing line is right here at Chapter 13,- this is the middle point or center spine of the open book starting a new stage for Jesus. He says it, "**NOW**, is the time **my hour has come** John had previously indicated about four times (2:4, 7:6, 7:30, 8:20) that 'it was not yet His hour... -- most dramatically when Jesus told his Mother Mary at the Cana wedding. Well, that has changed. He says, "It's up: Now is the time" In John 13:31 Jesus says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." But here is a good question: "What does Glory mean? Glory? What do we mean by 'glorified'?"

When we call something glorious, what does that mean? Maybe we are thinking of a great dramatic conclusion to a Broadway play, and say “It was glorious!” Or a grand finale at the symphony orchestra concert? Or a parting shot of a definitive military conquest against all odds? Or even a sport game’s gravity defying play like maybe we saw last week with a slingshot win of an underdog horse coming from the back of a pack (and he only got in race the day before because another one scratched!) to win in the last seconds of the KY Derby (Rich Strike!) Wasn’t that a glorious Run! And while the world may encourage self-glory, with constant ‘Look at me’ attitudes, Jesus reveals an opposite Glory. The Glory of other people being exalted by me, the glory of pulling up or building up others. Jesus says true glory is never about itself, it is never claimed up front. Back in = John 8:54 He had said, “If I glorify Myself, My glory means nothing.” So, true glory is never about self, but is always about others being served. If we claim glory for our self, it instantly spoils it (nothing noble about that). Think of the examples of glory I just mentioned. When there is a military victory, generals know the contingencies of events on the ground & the need for not only courageous front line soldiers, but also of air support, intelligence, recon and logistics personnel needed to engage and overcome. Or what do great athletes say when asked about awesome plays? They humbly say, “The Quarterback put the ball right where I was running” or the quarterback says ‘My line gives me plenty time to find the right play’ or even the wildest slam dunk in basketball leads to a humble player saying, “thanks to Jimmy’s rebound and fast pass, I could made a break and the whole court opened up to me” True glory is shared. Or I like to say that **glory deflects itself**, it shines off on to others. Again think of actors/actresses in great movies: when they are awarded honors, we all know the list of how many people should receive the honor too! (*We know the speech: “I want to thank my agent, producer, supporting actors, screen crew, better thank, the makeup and wardrobe-they are the real ones to make you look good!”*) Or with the great symphony performance, who gets credit: the conductor! And that is just what he/she does: Conducts. Notice that NAME: He/she is only acting as conduit for the glory of others—the many people and instruments, that he/she channels toward the audience. And even with the derby horse winner, who knew before Rich Strike had that after race skirmish with its own ‘lead horse’ as he tried to bite it, that derby winners would be ‘led-escorted’ by another horse back to the stable. How many times are heroes dragged in front of a camera and celebrated, and they say, “I didn’t do anything but my job, what anybody would do, I just jumped in to help”.

That is what Jesus is teaching today about true glory, that it is the lifting up of other people, acknowledging them; not the exaltation of one's own self. So getting back to the breakdown of John's gospel into two parts of a Book of signs or Book of miracles (1-12) and a Book of glory (13-21), by setting it up that way, John is saying, 'Don't get caught up in miraculous sights, the miracles are not Jesus' point, those spectacles are not important, it is the person being helped that is celebrated. John's Book of Signs is not a bragging list of Jesus saying look at what I did. No, it is Jesus saying look at how our Father is working in us. Because Jesus always points to the Father, saying things like, "I came to serve not to be served", "The Word I teach the Father has given me-I only say what Father tells me", "I am about the works of the Father" and "I came to do Father's will." And most interesting for us today is that the Book of Glory Chapter 13 starts with Jesus at the Last Supper, feeding His disciples, washing the feet of His disciples, supporting them and loving them to the end, ultimately dying for them on cross. Now, that is glory! Jesus' hour of glory. An hour in which he actually disappears, dies into us, loving us, feeding and lifting us up by dying for us. Jesus' hour really is our hour-Our 'being saved' hour. Since glory is always other-centered, about drawing others in, Jesus goes on to say God is glorified when we his followers 'love one another'. When we do things for other people, that is glory. When we love others as He loved us: When we follow Jesus, saying what He said, and Doing what He did. That is true glory! Serving, loving, lifting up others as Jesus did!