

## St Pius & St Anthony Homily 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Easter Year A1

What a memorable and beloved line in the gospel today? This is so many people's favorite verse. "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. (Jn 14:2). Yet, what does that really mean? The 'Father's House', what is it? Some say it is heaven as imagined to be all-inclusive, having accommodations for all the diverse multiplicity of God's unique children, each one of us precious and unrepeatable so that each one of us is welcomed to the kingdom of heaven to that spot uniquely arranged and suited to each – and all fitting together under one *roof!* Most simply, God has it '*covered*' – He knows and loves each one of us uniquely. So the Father's house is more expansive than we can begin to imagine (*St Paul said as much in 1 Corinthians 2:9 "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him"*) So, there we have it, 'Fathers House'. That is a descriptive phrase, a metaphor -a synonym picture of what we mean by "Heaven", or "Kingdom of God", or "Paradise", or the "Garden of Eden". I like to add this, that the 'Father's House' is also where we want to be, the Father's House is where we belong, the Father's House is where everything is okay and the Father's House is where everything is just as God designed it to be.

As an imaginative exercise, we could all think about what come so to our memory mind when we hear 'Father's House'? Like ask yourself, "Okay, how do I remember mom and dad's house-the house I grew up in?" But I think our childhood home is too known by us-we know them pretty well through and through. I suggest that the biblical 'Father's House' gives the impression that there are an infinitely numbered set of unexplored rooms (yet to discover) , SO I think it may be more instructive for us to think about how we remember our grandparents' homes. With them, I find a better comparison to the expansiveness of the Father's House, rooms opening to rooms and on and on. I remember that as a child when we would get lucky enough to spend a night with them, it seemed that both sets of my grandparents' houses had room after room in them (you'd turn a corner, go down the hall and there is another room, and another. (they were in fact modest houses but to us little kids – there was always somewhere in them that we had not been before.) For example, I recall in my mother's mom and dad's, and that they had front bedrooms, middle bedrooms, a sewing room, an Avon assembling room where Granny packaged her orders and on and on.

But the prize area, even to just be able to look into or if we were brave, even go down into was their canning cellar off a back bedroom. It was under a carpeted floor that had a square cut out and you could lift up the door, and descend down stairs into an underground safe room – the walls were stacked with shelf after shelf of canned beans, tomato juice, canned sausage and who knows what else. But I learned that you had to know which cousin could be trusted to go down with, because the light switch to cellar was up top, on the wall of the bedroom. Once the door closed on you, that cousin controlled your world!

Or also, at my Dad's mom and dad too, their home had turns and twists in the house that opened into such interesting spaces. Again halls of bedrooms, out from the one there was 4 or 5 little bed rooms off the hall and then it turning back toward the den (where the fireplace was) – but the mystery room there, was downstairs in the full basement that had a door, that was always closed and it contained a big old coal furnace (*it was converted to wood by my lifetime*) complete with a little side room, for I guess, coal storage back in the day, with a chute down from a ground level window. But, my point in bringing these up is that there was so much to imagine, still unexplored, and if this was what we did see and not understand, how much more do we not know about to begin with? Mysteries upon mysteries in their houses..... (and so too with the Father's House).

I think this may be behind so many people's love and fascination with Jesus talking in the gospel today about "the Father's House, with many, many rooms" I do think a bottom line interpretation of the Father's House, is that God will take care of us in ways unimaginable to us. He will make arrangements to receive us eternally in this room after room after room, in the Father's so many-peopled home.

I think that is where His next line comes in about Him 'Preparing' for us? He goes onto say, "*If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to **prepare** a place for you? And if I go and **prepare** a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be*" (Jn 14:2-3). He is saying that He takes care of us. Trust Him. I certainly do on this. He says there are many rooms. Okay, I accept/believe Him. He will take care of us, because this is the same wonder worker who fed as many people who showed up (over 5,000 in Matt. 14:13-21) He could prepare and make accommodations for that many extra

plates-and every parent knows the shock of their child asking without you knowing it, for all their friends to stay for dinner, and you have scrape around to manage having enough for them all. But Jesus covers everyone who straggles in to scene – & the same can be said about healing in Matt 4:24 it says that “people brought to him everyone who was ill with various diseases.....and He healed them.” Again, Jesus took care of them all. He managed to do it. So, Jesus will make arrangements, He will make provisions to find a place for everyone. Again, our Jesus is good at preparing for us, and finding a place for everyone. Remember this is the child king started out life, finding a place for Himself, even if it was a barn or cave to make do when there was no room at the world’s inn? Or like last week when I pointed out that our Good Shepherd can create a overnight pen, or sheep enclosure in nature using a stream, cliff face or stacked limbs to makes walls before laying himself down on the ground to be the final wall, or the door gate for the housing out in the field. Also, this is the same Jesus who back in Holy Week, sent his two disciples into the city Jerusalem to meet a man with water jar and that water man would open his house for them to have a room to celebrate Passover Meal together (Matt 26:19) Who would have thought that even possible? Finding a room in Jerusalem at Passover would be comparable to finding a hotel vacancy in Paducah during Quilt Festival last week! But with Jesus, He always prepares and provides for us. Faith finds a way. With Jesus, there will always be a room to be found!