

St Pius & St Anthony Homily Easter Sunday Year A1

A couple times recently I have been walking across the floor somewhere (*maybe the church vestibule or the front room of the rectory*), and something catches my eye, and I bend over to pick it up. It is a bolt, or a cap or screw, but I'm not sure where it goes or from where it came? But it is pretty important, I just don't know it yet! Hang on to it or my secret is to put it in nearest drawer for safe keeping. It'll be critical later, like it's the missing bolt to the breakfast table chair that I won't know is missing its bolt until it almost collapses on someone or wobbles.

Or, not long ago, I was mowing and saw ahead of the mower tire on the ground, a curved black piece of plastic. Hmm? Looks something like a carburetor cover for weed-eater-oh wait, is that also square air filter up ahead too! Better stop, pick it up & and not mow it to pieces. (*Yes it was that – and yes it had vibrated off with the weed-eater's earlier use?*)

Or you have you ever seen something seemingly out of place, but suddenly realized that it is an indication of something much larger going on? I recall in my first year after being ordained, one time I was going out to my truck to drive to our catholic school and celebrate mass with the students. As I approached the garage, I thought "What is that prayer card doing on the ground alongside a couple coins? I bent down and picked it up, thought "That is weird." I had my mind on the homily for the kids so when I turned the corner, I saw what looked like a bunch of popcorn strewn all across the ground. (I thought, "What -- has a mouse been hiding a food stash in the wall, & the wind blew it all out (*it was an old garage*). Then, it hit me. That is shattered auto glass, and the prayer cards had been in my glove box!! My truck had been broken into! Oh no! Long story short, I wasn't going to be late, so I just broke free the rest of the glass and drove on to school (*I realized that while safety glass won't sever your hand off, when it falls on you, it will still stick you good if you sit on it! But I did what I had to-mass on time!*)

But has such a notice of a small detail for you, suddenly opens up into a much greater realization. I bet such has happened to you sometime. And that is what the disciples are in for when it comes to Jesus' resurrection. They take note of something but are not sure what it all means. I think that is what goes on with the Beloved Disciple and Peter in the gospel today. They notice the burial cloths of Jesus, but it doesn't hit them what it all means. And even more, what it means that Jesus rose from the dead, hasn't sunk into them yet. For example, they

pursue Mary's notice of Jesus being absent from the tomb, & they know it means something big, but they don't seem to be sure what, it is all going to add up to yet. The last line of gospel I think is something for all of us to ponder for the next fifty days (*Easter to Pentecost*) John 20:9 says, "For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead" What does it mean that Jesus rose from the dead? (*Sure he is alive and returns to Father, but what does that do for us?*)

In a couple places in the John's gospel, the disciples have those 'AHA' moments, when it suddenly occurs to them that something, Jesus earlier said or did, now makes all the sense in the world! For example, when Jesus cleansed the Temple, in John 2:21-22, it says after His cryptic remarks about rebuilding the temple in 3 days, John tells us, "***But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.***" Oh, that is what it means-now we know! Or again in the 12th chapter of John after Jesus triumphantly was welcomed into Jerusalem with shouts of 'Hosanna- Blessed is he who comes in name of Lord'. It says afterward, "***His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus had been glorified they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done this for him***" (Jn 12:16). Maybe not now, but later this will all fit into place, and we'll fully understand its significance. And just two nights ago, at the Last Supper, Jesus indicated such a delayed but delightful realization that comes later, when after He washed their feet, Jesus said "***What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later***" (Jn 13:7). So, Easter day and after, we keep seeking what it means to be raised to new life with Jesus. What it all implies; we don't know yet. But we know what it takes to get there. We must seek Jesus, we must watch for Him, and we must go with Him.

I love to point out: Who sees Jesus first? Peter and John leave the tomb and return to home to the others, but Mary stays by the tomb, still seeking Jesus. And it is right after this 'empty tomb episode' that she encounters the Risen Lord. He is there outside the tomb in the garden. She sought Him out, she stayed where He was last (like returning again to His words) and she found Him. And we will too, if we go back to His words, recall His times with us. Then He will show us Himself.

Our 2nd Reading said, from Colossians 3:1-2, to 'Seek what is above.....think of what is above.' That is resurrection. Holding on and looking closer. A powerful

example of what such a 'Seeking Faith' finds and what our Believing Eyes can see, is reflected in a wonderful story told about two roommates in a downtown city nursing home. They always talked to one another every morning, after lights were turned on and the nurse came in. The nurse would pull back the window curtain and announce breakfast was coming. They would talk and the man by the wall would describe what he saw outside. For example, one day he'd mention *"The kids are all dressed up so colorfully this morning and running all about. Oh, one fell. Oh, now, another stopped, helped him get up."* Or another day, he might have mentioned *"There are a couple of extra moms out today and they seem to be having more fun do on the swings than the kids."* And on and on. Well, regrettably & typical of us humans, the man by the hallway, began to get jealous of his friend who got the window view every morning. Little by little his resentment grew over time. And then one night after his friend had gone to the hospital for surgery, he never returned - he had succumbed to complications after surgery. What it meant was that late that afternoon, the other man was moved over by the window. That night he could hardly sleep, filled with such wonder, finally getting the window bed. When morning eventually came, he sat up in the bed, so that when the nurse came in, announcing breakfast, she pulled the curtain back and then, he was so shocked and filled with such regret. The pulled back curtain revealed another high-rise brick wall building, not any playground, field, flower beds or gardens. It hit him, and he realized that his friend-roommate, had been giving him hope all along, sharing with him some joy in an otherwise monotonous day and he was trying to lift his spirits all along. The original man had faith, he sought life, he knew God had more in mind, had greater life to give them. Colossians told us to *"Seek what is above, think not of earth, but what is to come"*. Our believing eyes will see, and our trusting hearts will find Jesus. Jesus wants to bring us new life, to give us a fuller Life, and to teach us that there is so much more to Life! We are blessed to have these 50 days of rising with Christ: 50 days of seeking what is above, of coming to know what it means for us that Jesus 'rises from the dead'.

John 10:10 "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."