

## St Pius & St Anthony Homily 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Easter Year C (2025) Luke

I was recently walking past a flower bed that I had just weeded out, the day before, to make good growing room for the sprouting flowers (*to prevent the weeds from 'stealing the sunshine' or using up the water of the flowers*), and I saw a debris field of **all these sticks**, mostly straight looking and all about 3 inches long. I thought, "who did this--Where did all that come from?" Well, you guessed it, I looked up and in the crepe myrtle branch above, I saw the remnant of a bird's attempted construction of nest. I'm sure the bird was just as frustrated as I was, as I raked up its clutter from the bed, I'm sure the bird was frustrated trying to build a nest in these recent every other day 35 mile per hour wind gusts we've been having, topped off with actual T-storm passes! But I guess the struggle makes the success sweeter! But also, recently, when I walking up to the front door, while making a home visit, I saw all this brown grass stuffing draped over (like Spanish moss) their mailbox on the wall by their front door. What a nice spring decoration? I peered in closer to look, and jumped all startled as a little bird came flying out like a missile toward my face. While I was thinking, "Oh no, I didn't mean to cause the mother to leave her egg warming", I felt it, a wetness on my wrist and thought, "Oh no, I hope I didn't scare the "....." out of her?" I hadn't, because it turned out that the bottle of water I was holding, splashed on me when I jumped back. Wheew!

But every spring, don't those birds go at it, making their home spaces again, their nests. And don't we do that, too? Isn't that 'nesting' instinct universal, our homemaking or refuge building---don't we all love to come up with our special get-away places, (AKA, homes, clubhouses, camps, hideouts, mancaves or she-sheds), but those places we find sanctuary in and love to rest in or get away to.

I don't want to give away any other kids' special hiding places, but when I was little, the house we grew up in, my brothers and I slept on the 2nd floor, and the house's steeply sloped roof (like the letter A-shape), caused our room to be just the center of the floor, because the ceiling got really low where it joined down to the wall – so much so that we could bump our heads getting out of bed, if we weren't thinking of it. But that style of house build, created awesome hideouts behind the side walls – my dad had little doors for access and storage in there – and we loved it as a clubhouse or hideout (only downsides were the heat and having to be careful to keep your feet on the rafter beams!)

But my point in bringing these examples up, is how we humans like to make our nests, too, and create our special places of peace and call them sanctuaries! (As the old TV commercial said it, "Calgon take me away" or how the rock band Cinderella says it "We all need a little shelter").

Well, Jesus introduces just such a sanctuary for us, in today's gospel. He says in Jn 14:23 "Whoever loves me.... keeps my word...**My father and I will come make our dwelling in that person.**" God come to live in us! Instant access to

peace. We can't beat that. God dwelling in us. What a comfort to know that we have such a replenishing source of peace right here in our souls (God comes to us, has created that spot within us to access and find refreshment and peace).

Bible scholars point out that in Gospel of John, this is Jesus' first mention of 'peace'. And it happens to be the night before He dies for us, but most importantly this is the night He also teaches the lengthiest discourse (Gives this Word of His) & He washes the disciples' feet (Gives example of His Work). That is just what Jesus is telling us in today's gospel. 1) Keep my word, 2) Love me-'*do my loving Work*', and God is in you! "Say as I say, do as I do, and I'm in you!" Well, peace is in you, peace like nothing the world can offer (Jesus says "peace not as the world gives"). We find with Jesus a serenity & contentment like nothing in this world. Yes the world would tell you differently. Count on it, like the slickest salesperson, the world always has one more false promise to sell you, like how all day long leaders, misrepresent and deceive (lie) about what they'll do for you, or how advertisers offer solutions to everything, if only you buy their stuff, but we know, "They never deliver and the world never truly satisfies."

But Jesus says our true peace, our real sanctuary comes from resting in Him (or allowing Him into us – creating that space and opening in our hearts where His Word is kept and motivation for His loving work is generated). This is the same peace Jesus talks about over in the gospel of Matthew too. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus tells us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...."! Like today again, He says, "Love me--keep my word, and I & The Father will come to live within you....." (Jn 14:23) He is saying that our lasting peace is no farther away from us, than the next time we reflectively hold His Word in our heart, or enact His compassionate Work in ourselves by any loving service to another in His Name (imitating His example). Keeping His Word and Loving like Him, is like a 'Star Wars tractor beam' of tranquility, drawing us into His peace and serenity. Jesus says, "Keep my word & love me in others", and His peace will come and shelter us!

*Jn 16:33 "I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world."*