

Homily Outline for Catholic Schools Week Masses

3rd Week in Ordinary Time, Year A/Cycle 2 - Week of January 26th, 2020

Marquette Catholic High School (Alton, IL)
& St. Anthony High School (Effingham, IL)

† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois

I. Green Day: "Boulevard of Broken Dreams"

I walk this empty street on the boulevard of broken dreams
Where the city sleeps and I'm the only one and I walk alone.
My shadow's the only one that walks beside me,
My shallow heart's the only thing that's beating,
Sometimes I wish someone out there would find me,
'Til then, I walk alone.

A. This song expresses a FEAR of walking alone through life.

B. But also expresses a HOPE that someday someone will walk along with us on this journey.

II. Last week I was in Washington DC, with 500,000 young people from all over our country for the March for Life.

A. Describe the scene: at the Vigil Mass and the March, the vast crowds, the excitement, the happiness on everyone's faces, how inspiring it is to be with all those young people from every corner of our country, including hundreds from around our diocese.

B. Jesus was confronted by a bit of a similar scene in today's Gospel.

1. Tuesday: "His mother and His brethren came..." (describe the packed house, even Mary cannot get near Jesus...).

2. Wednesday: “a very large crowd gathered about him...” (describe the craziness as Christ tries to speak to the fray, eventually speaking from a boat because He couldn’t talk to so many).
3. In both cases, Jesus is so smashed by large crowds, he can barely preach.

C. BUT, He is not annoyed by the crowds, He asks for their help!

1. Tuesday: He relies on someone letting Him use their home, He receives Mary’s word from people who passed it through the crowd.
2. Wednesday: he relies on one of the disciples to let Him use their boat, and everyone to be quiet to listen to the parable.

D. Sometimes we think that Jesus does everything by Himself: He teaches, works miracles, goes to His Passion, and rises from the dead all by Himself. But actually, in almost every one of those scenes, He enlists the help of those around Him:

1. He relies on people to invite others to come and hear.
2. He works miracles when people bring Him to the sick: their friends, family, or people from their town.
3. He tells the apostles to feed the crowd when He multiplies the loaves and fishes.
4. At His Passion, He carries the cross with Simon’s help and offers His life with Mary and John standing by His side.
5. Finally, even at the resurrection, it is Mary and Peter and John who first see Jesus risen from the dead, and without them, that message wouldn’t have gotten out.

III. Jesus calls all of us to help Him too.

A. There are four words/verbs that are the motto of this Catholic Schools Week: Learn, Serve, Lead, Succeed. These words, though, don't really matter if there's not a meaning behind them or a purpose for them.

1. We learn something so that we can teach people, or engineer something, or write articles, or calculate important numbers.
2. We serve people, to help them, to give them care and love and make them happy (e.g., how have they served in some way: at Mass, in the cafeteria, at home, with their friends).
3. We lead somewhere, to a destination or goal, a target.
4. Finally, even success does not just come out of nowhere. It is achieved when we reach our destination, or when we accomplish something great.

B. As Catholic schools, we know that the deepest meaning behind all those words is because Jesus calls us to follow Him in all those ways:

1. Learn - to know Him, to know the Bible, to listen to Jesus in prayer and bring other people to Him.
2. Serve - to love people like Jesus loves them, to bring people who are hurting to Him so that they can be healed.
3. Lead - to set our sights on heaven, and tell other people the way, to preach the Gospel ourselves, and put our whole lives behind it.
4. Succeed - and we know that the greatest success possible is to become saints, to live forever with God in Heaven.

C. What made the March for Life so amazing was because the *reason* we were all there was because of Jesus.

1. He asked us there to be His witnesses to the world, and so we did, and it brought such joy and meaning!
2. He invites all of us every day to be His witnesses – to learn about Him, to serve others for Him, to lead others to Him, and to succeed by living lives knowing we are called to be part of His story.

IV. Today/Yesterday is/was the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas.

A. Declared by Pope St. Leo XIII to be the patron saint of Catholic schools.

B. As a student, his burning question was, “Who is God?”

1. He spent his life teaching and writing, seeking to answer this question.
2. We do well to follow his example, seeking the answer to the question, “Who is God?”
3. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the answer to that question will be found not just in books, but in lives of prayer.
4. So we turn now in prayer to receive Our Lord into our hearts in this Eucharist.

May God give us this grace. Amen.