

Year A 5th Sunday of Lent Homily Outline

The Gospels in general give us a pattern, an example, a model for what a great story looks like: The Cross comes before the Resurrection - the story of Lazarus in particular shows us this truth, and it's where we are at in our liturgical year, you have to go through Lent to arrive at Easter. What is your story?

A confession: *I binge-watched "Lost" the ABC show that aired from 2004 – 2010. 6 seasons, 121 episodes – I deeply regret it.*

- I loved each episode - and at the end of each one I'd be like - okay, just one more. Yep even at 1am
- The whole thing ended up being some message of how all roads leads to the truth or something - basically the whole "Lost" universe ended up not making any sense - I'd say there was no underlying metaphysic or philosophy so that it was reduced to something silly.
- Now even though I had liked each episode before that - the ending sort of reached back to ruin the whole thing.
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The ending has the ability to project back into the story and change the meaning of the whole thing – in a story, but even in reality – to change reality – for the bad...but also for the good.

I recently binge-read "Crime and Punishment" (twice)

- It's a miserable story - dark and depressing
- But then you get to the last ten pages and there is the culmination of this little, hidden, kind of quiet thread of the story of the sacrifice and patience and generosity on the part of poor little Sonya - which leads to the miraculous conversion and redemption of the horrible Raskolnikov.
- Why not just read the ending? Because you can't! You can't just have the joyful resurrection part free of cost - it's a law of life, a law of nature or something - you have to endure the hardship and difficulty to really enjoy and appreciate the reward of redemption.

Story of Lazarus

- Long story that begins with the ominous line "Now a man was ill..."
- There's the flickering and dying of hope that begins with this strange line:
 - "NOW JESUS LOVED MARTHA AND HER SISTER AND LAZARUS."
 - SO, WHEN HE HEARD THAT HE WAS ILL, HE REMAINED FOR TWO DAYS IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS."
 - There is a lot of sadness, grief and mourning
- ...till you get the end - and then all of the sudden Jesus calls him from the tomb - there's resurrection and life and restoration.

Simple assignment: write your story of coronavirus pandemic including the ending.

There was this pandemic that forced us to shut down life as we knew it. Schools and businesses were closed, and we had to stay home. Some people were fighting over the last toilet paper rolls at the supermarket, some people spent all their time watching the news and worrying – it was a time of real uncertainty.

There was a part of me that was tempted to...

E.g.

(sleep in, lay on the couch, scroll endlessly through the internet, bicker with my brothers and sisters, vent my frustrations on my family and...) *fill in your particular temptations.*

It was a difficult transition and I had lots of excuses, but I decided to...

E.g.

Personal (make a daily schedule, Get up each day at ** and make my bed, try to never complain and if I did I immediately apologized, sit down and read **, no matter the weather go out for a walk, never snack between meals, find something new and fun to do every day as a family, call **, not drink before 11am, declutter every room in the house starting with the garage...) *fill in your personal goals*

Spiritual goals (watch Mass each day, say the rosary every day, pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, do the Stations each day, set aside 15 minutes for Scripture meditation, say the liturgy of the Hours, from lbreviary app...) *fill in your goals*

At the end of the first month of this crazy story I...

(fill in what you want it to look like...)

Bishop Sheen said: *“When all is said and done, there are only two philosophies of life. One is first the feast, then the hangover; the other, first the fast and then the feast.”*

Which one are you going to choose? If we follow the pattern laid out for us by Jesus this doesn't have to be a long sad and depressing story that ends in sorrow and death. It can be a story with drama, obstacles, challenges, twists and turns and finally arrives at the redemption and the resurrection that makes the whole story worth it.