

Fr.Vince's Homily for the 5th Sunday of Lent '20

(The Gospel is the story of Jesus bringing his friend Lazarus back from the dead)

2 stories of different kinds of death

1. Altoona man Chad Wells with 2 kids....while going to work..hit broadside by a 19 year old in a stolen car....died at the scene....his wife Angie, taking 2nd car came upon it 5 min. later.
Who is going to console her....she has died in spirit along with him...who will move her from this life of despair?
2. A former parishioner of mine got a new job across the country, moved the family there weeks before the company was sold and he was let go. His marriage shaky....his teenage son, angry. Who was to put them back together?

We have our regular life.....which includes what our mission of life entails...and it unfolds its meaning.

But often we see our mission as followers of Jesus: AS AN 'ADDED ON' ACTIVITY...

***But it's not just added on.

Our mission is: THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES
...our lifestyle as Christians.

What does the Gospel today say our mission is?

TO FOLLOW JC IN RAISING PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD!

Jesus' power touched the physical...but Lazarus would die again...the point of the great sign is to touch the spirit...the soul of the man. To bring his spirit back to life.

That is the part that cannot die.

Our call is to accept Jesus' POWER OF GOD and bring back to life those who have died in spirit.

***SO HAVE YOU EVER RAISED SOMEONE FROM THE DEAD?

I BET MANY OF YOU HAVE!!

From the sports section a while ago I cut out an article about a young talented athlete and his stepfather.

(He is a HS star who cared for his disabled step father and found the meaning of life.)
This young man put his career on hold as he called his ailing step-father from the grave of despair...pain...and hopelessness...and gave him new life. They were teaching each other how to care for one another and find life's real meaning.

The article withheld the name of the stepfather....BUT WE ALL KNOW HIS NAME!!

His name is LAZARUS!

And the young man lovingly says to him: LAZARUS, COME OUT!

At Christ the King nearly 30 years ago...I got awakened in the middle of the night by a call from a young man whose fiancée had broken up with him. We had never met...he got the phone # from the bulletin.

He was going to harm himself and he wanted me to give a message to his parents, family, and to her.

By the time 3 hours were over....he set down the gun.

That man is alive and well...over 60 years old...and has 11 grand-children...

I know his name, but I can't tell it to you.

But it doesn't matter...you already know his name...IT IS LAZARUS!

And in the 3 hours on the phone, I said a lot of things....

But in the end it was only one thing that mattered: LAZARUS, COME OUT!

That is our mission....TO BRING PEOPLE BACK FROM THE DEAD

...most times it doesn't look nearly as dramatic as my 2 examples.

But it is no less important to the people you give new life to.

Every time you are willing to touch the heart of a lonely or grieving person...

You say: LAZARUS, COME OUT!

Every time you help someone who is lost...find their way in life

You say: LAZARUS, COME OUT!

Every time in school or work (whenever we get back to them)...you stand up for someone who is being put down.

You say: LAZARUS, COME OUT!

THAT IS OUR MISSION

Thru Jesus Christ...God wants you to make people whole. And they, you!

It is not always people who are 'all together' who can best carry out this mission---
It's us---you and me---fragile, afraid, unqualified, yet powerful!

We are a parish for a purpose.....a purpose not always understood.

We do not live only for ourselves-----or only for our family---

We live for God----who thru Jesus Christ---empowers us for his mission in the world

Oh, how much we resist this.....this resistance is so hard to conquer!

But do not resist your happiness.....do not resist finding meaning in your life!

Nothing.....and I mean, nothing.....beats bringing someone back from the dead.

30 years ago, a young 18-year old in Bondurant.....Kenny Trebon came home on a Saturday night....kissed his mother....and when back to his car and took his life.

You can imagine the worst.....the family destruction.....

I visit his grave once a year.....it's has his picture on the grave stone....frozen in time.

I became friends with his grandmother, Loretta Swift.....who died a few years ago. In a visit with her, we talked about Kenny....and what she would say when she met him again.... Would she say “WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?” Would she say, “WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE?”

I told her that she has been saying that for 30 years.....try something else.

Which got us laughing so hard.....

I don't know if she said anything when they met in heaven.....as they held each other raising each other up.....even in death!

THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO SAY.....

....BECAUSE ALL HAS BEEN ALREADY SAID:

Jesus whispers to them in that very moment: “Lazarus, come out!”