

Sermon: November 29, 2009

“Sunrise ---- revisited”

There are “beautiful” sunrises ... then there is the one this morning ----- a 12 on a 10-point scale.

I could only think of the words in our opening song today: *“My Lord, what a morning!!”*

I’m not sure exactly what it is about the SUNRISE ...

You look at it ---- so powerful, so innocent. It’s almost like God uses the sunrise to tell us:

“No matter how crummy your day was yesterday ... no matter how much you may dread what’s coming up later today ... no matter how confusing and painful life can be ----- THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!!”

The sunrise ... the sunset ... the beauty of the walk through the virgin woods ... mountain-tops ... the ocean beach ... even a look across LaGrange Road ...

Hey, when you have a chance ... take a walk out back ... stand at the edge of where our property meets the forest preserve ... look back towards the church ----- such raw, innocent beauty. We have a little “hunk of the kingdom” here.

All this beauty ----- it’s not Christian or Jewish or Islam ... it’s not white or black, Hispanic or Swedish, Israeli or Palestinian ... it’s not liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat ...

It’s raw. It’s life. It’s what happens when we allow God’s world and nature to be our teachers.

Do you want to know where God lives?

Do you want to know how God speaks?

Do you want to get in touch with God’s will?

Do you want to know what God looks like?

Do you want to cut to the very essence of religion?

Do you want to discover what it is about God’s spirit that binds us together and can bring healing to this world?

Would you like to learn more about the truth of God’s “judgement”???? ... all this goofy talk about Jesus coming back and somehow rescuing the world???

Well, then ----- SLOW DOWN!!

Look at the sunrise. Listen to your heartbeat.

Come by here during the week ... sit alone in the sanctuary ... turn on the Christmas tree lights ... and listen to the silence of your own soul.

Stop by Thanksgiving morning. Come into Charter Hall for a “thanksgiving feast” with our disabled friends from St. Coletta’s. Listen to their shouts of joy ... watch their eyes ... taste the wonder of it all.

And then we will know:

Jesus isn’t coming back ... someday.

We need not “fear” the rapture.

Jesus is back. Has been ... always will be.

And the “rapture”???? this invention of folks who want you to believe some will be saved at the expense of others???? ----- the rapture is here everyday.

Each day ... the good Lord floods us with choices & moments & opportunities to witness unto the goodness of God’s spirit. And ---- we are called ...

to use everything we have ...

our money and our pain,

our good fortune and the depths of our despair,

our abundance and our poverty ...

Yes, we are called to use it all ----- to make a difference, to change the world at least to change the “little corner” where we live each day.

This past Thursday and Friday ... in the Tribune ... was a series about the incredible journey of Dawn Dubsky.

We helped her out a bit ... and dedicated our Mother-Daughter banquet in her honor. She is a nurse ... and after returning home from Africa ... she wasn't feeling right. Well ... she had malaria. Her nightmare culminated with the amputation of her arms and her legs.

She never quit. Now ... she has turned her nightmare into hope ... as she has established an organization dedicated to the elimination of malaria in the village where she got it.

Then today ... in the Sun-times (I want to make sure there is balance in my references.) ----- a story about a 69-year-old homeless man: BERNARD. He has lived "on the streets" for years ... now it's in the River North area. He does odd jobs ... helps some of the local businesses ... he has a purpose in life. He has turned the despair of his journey into hope for others.

Your story and mine ... aren't nearly as dramatic.

In fact ... the truth of your journey ----- only you know it.

If we learn one thing from life *nobody walks in your shoes ... but you!!*

Well, almost nobody ... there is this gentle carpenter named Jesus!!

THE SUNRISE TEACHES US ... our calling, each day, is to take our footsteps & our journey ... and from it ----- bring at least one other person a bit of hope.

Dawn Dubsy teaches us ----- you don't have to have legs to "walk tall" ... you don't have to have arms to "reach out." It's about your heart, your soul, what lies deep inside of you.

What you need is a heart beating to the tune of the sunrise!!

And Bernard teaches us ----- you don't have to have a house to have a home.

You need a heart ... born of courage.

We are connected to Dawn ... to Bernard and they are connected to us.

The sunrise ... it belongs to us ... it belongs to no one ... it belongs to everyone.

Jesus is a carpenter ... whose journey through the streets of Galilee is just as real today as it was over 2000 years ago.

Religion is not about a 2nd coming ... it's about Jesus coming back ----- everyday!! ... and helping us re-discover the beauty and purity of religion.

Oh, yes ... there is a judgment.

It's rooted in the daily challenge each of us faces ----- to make our personal journey one of goodness and hope unto others.

Tomorrow ... well, the "glow of the tree" may wear thin ... as you are caught in traffic, and already behind schedule by 8:30 in the morning. My advice?????

--- turn on some Christmas music ...

--- think about the sunrise ...

And when you get to your destination ... it will be ok!!

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