

Sermon: April 4, 2010 (Easter Sunday)

“We all have a story”

Each one of us ... in this humble place ... has a story to tell.

Stories about the good times and the tough times ... the victories and defeats ... and everything in-between. A story is not a story ... unless it can be told. And ... as humans ... we need to have spaces and places where we are free to talk about our journey.

I certainly can't speak for you ... but this time of year is my “missing those I love” time. Not sure what it is ... the smell of the flowers? ... the atmosphere of holy week? ... the memories and sounds????

*I can still see my grandma's hideous Easter bonnet.

*Maybe the bow-tie I was forced to wear on Easter Sunday.

*The smell of lamb gravy in Mt. Greenwood.

*Strong coffee and shots of whiskey in Roseland.

*Walking the farm-field ... to see if it's still too wet to begin planting.

*The first crack of the bat in little league season. I must admit ... last year, with Q playing ... we didn't hear the “crack of the bat” very often@!!

Why does our youth group know ADAM ALLSOT like a brother ... even tho' he died 16 years ago??? ---- because we still TELL ADAM'S STORY. Why do we put bricks out back and get goose-bumps when we sing “I love to tell the story”?? because here ---- WE NEVER FORGET THOSE WE LOVE!!
Without our stories we are nobody.

So, the other day I go to the Riviera in my constant search for youth and fitness. I must admit ----- just walking in the door of the “Riv” makes me feel young and thin!@!!

Now ... I give myself half-an-hour!@!! ... that's because I'm “busy and important” and have to get back to the office to meet someone. I rush in the door ... get into the locker room ... start getting dressed for a workout ... there is only one elderly gentleman near me.

You know how it is ... you see someone ... give him a quick “how are you?” ... but ----- you really don't mean it. Well ... this guy must be Missouri Synod ... he takes me literally ... I say “how are you?” ... and he actually thinks I want an answer to the question. He answers my question ...

“I'm not doing all that well ... the wife took a spill the other day ... ”

(I love how the guys at the Riv refer to their spouses as “the wife” like she is something sitting on the shelf at home. Oh, well ... he continues to tell me “how he's doing” ... as I try to get out the door ...)

“But, my son is coming in for Easter ... and my granddaughter ... did I tell you she is getting a full scholarship to music school in New York? ... amazing girl.

Anyway --- never thought growing up on a farm in Iowa ... I would end up here ...

Good talking to you. Hey ... aren't you the reverend who did my brother-in-law's funeral about a month ago??

Yes --- your church ... next to the high school, right????

Good seeing you ... tell me a bit about your family????? ”

Twenty-five minutes later ... he walks out the door. He's happy as a clam ... his story has been told ... he has a new “best friend” ... and ----- I'm just as fat as I was when I entered the joint.

I put my street clothes back on ... realizing full well ... it's not God's will for me to exercise on this day.

I do know, however ... my life is richer because of his story ... and hopefully his is, too, because someone was there. Each of us has a story ... it needs to be told ... and a “story isn't a story” unless someone is there to listen.

Walking into the locker room ... all I cared about was my schedule. My schedule didn't include listening to a stranger's story. Too often ... all I care about is my story and my life ...

It's time to spend more of my life ----- LISTENING TO OTHERS.

On that first Easter Sunday ... the women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. The stone is rolled away ... the tomb is empty. The angel says to the ladies:

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead? ... he’s not dead ... he’s alive!!”

How often ... in life ... do I LOOK FOR WHAT IS LIVING AMONG THE DEAD????

A mistake made.

A wrong turn.

Trying to please people who don't like me ... and I don't like them.

Angry e-mails ... hatred for others ... jealousy and mis-placed priorities.

These are dead-ends ... empty tombs. Why waste time there????

JESUS LIVES in the very air we breathe. Jesus lives in second chances, in the courage to decide ... in not being afraid to beat the odds. Jesus lives in the “common moments” of life ... where we dare to be decent and kind ... and refuse to let life turn us into cynics and nay-sayers.

EASTER SUNDAY is kind-of like a minister's and church's “super-bowl.”

The church is full ... it feels good.

But ... the “real Easter” is in life's “ordinary days.”

*When you have to fill out yet another job application.

*As you face another medical opinion about your re-hab.

*Fighting your employer and/or your insurance company for rights and benefits you thought you had.

*Slugging it out everyday ... getting weary ... and starting to doubt yourself.

Just remember:

EASTER ISN'T A HOLIDAY ... it's a way of looking at life.

An empty tomb.

And --- a full heart.

By the way ... did you see the SUNRISE TODAY?????

Yes, the tomb is empty.

And the sun ... and THE SON ... **they rise everyday!!**

Don Borling
All Saints Lutheran Church
13350 LaGrange Road
Orland Park, IL 60462
April 4, 2010

www.allsaintsjoy.com

allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net

708-448-2939