

Sermon: February 27, 2011
"Sunrise and split-the-pot"

As I watched the sunrise this morning ... I began to reflect.

The sunrise belongs to everyone. The sun rises over Libya ... it rises over Children's Memorial Hospital, where Connor is ... the sun rises over Manor Care Re-hab ... it rises over your house, my house, and the White House ... it rises over Randy's Market and the local liquor store --- closing after 54 years ... the sun rises over a humble home in Tinley Park, where my one-legged-butcher friend lives ...

You know? ----- I AM TIRED OF SAYING **GOOD-BYE**.

Is it part of getting older??? ... do we take saying "good-bye" more personally?

I guess it's just that we see more of life. We say good-bye to those we love ... to things we can't do any more ... to moments and places so sacred in our lives ...

I think of Ed O'Malley's family. Ed's mom lived 90 years ... but no matter how old we are ----- saying good-bye to a parent or grandparent ... it's never easy.

How about Connor's family? When this little guy was diagnosed with cancer ... they began saying "good-bye" to what is normal. For the next several months ... their "normal routines" will change dramatically ... as Connor's journey consumes them physically, spiritually, and financially.

How about Kozie???? ... he and his family have had a drug and liquor store here for 54 years ... and tomorrow is the last day ----- how do you say "good-bye" to your family business??

Our friends Mike and Ruth from Heartland ... with us today ... over the years they have said "good-bye" to so many kids who have spent their "fragile years" in this place of comfort and hope.

So, yesterday I am leaving Randy's Market. I go there twice a day ----- once to get what I need ... and then I go back to get what I forgot the first time!@!! John "the one-legged-butcher" is having a smoke outside the front door. I smile ---- "Hey, John ... why are you working on Saturday?"

He looks at me: "Rev ... it's been nice knowing you."

"What do you mean?"

"THIS IS MY LAST DAY."

We look at each other ... no words.

"John, Tinley Park isn't the end of the world. Besides ... I have a nice seat for you in our church ... last row ... the cheap seats!!"

He forced a smile ... so did I ... I could see the sadness in his eyes.

God, I'm tired of saying "good-bye."

I drive up-and-down LaGrange Road. I see the empty stores, the vacant lots. I drive through the neighborhood ... and see the "for sale" signs next to empty homes.

I think of the dreams that didn't come true ... the hopes shattered ... investing in this great country of ours ... but then the unexpected comes ----- *and we have to say "good-bye."*

I hear the words of the gospel lesson this morning ... Jesus says:

Don't worry about your life ... what you shall eat, drink, or wear ...

(I do ok with the don't-worry-about-what-you-wear part ... but the rest of what Jesus says????)

Look at the birds of the air ... no one feeds them, and they fly so free ...

The lilies of the field ... no one dresses them ... but even Solomon couldn't match their splendor ...

Before you worry about all this ----- strive first for the kingdom, and everything else will fall into place!

Easier said than done, Jesus ... how does this work in my life????

We do have a lot to worry about. Our mortgage and debts. We battle cancer and Alzheimer's and old age, and arthritis. We take care of our kids, our grandkids ... maybe an aging parent. Some of us don't make enough money to pay the bills. We have a business to run, a sump-pump to replace. There is a young teacher in our school district ... his wife dies, with no warning or reason.

JESUS KNOWS ALL THJIS.

Jesus' heart and soul is firmly planted in the earthy reality we live in every day.

And you know as well as I do ...

No matter how rich or poor you are ... no matter how much stuff we have or don't have ...

When we put others first ...

When we are able to "rise above" just thinking about ourselves ...

When giving unto others gives you bigger goose-bumps than getting things for yourself ...

NO MATTER HOW TOUGH LIFE IS ... NO MATTER WHAT WE GO THROUGH ...

OUR SOUL WILL SMILE!!

Which brings me to the spaghetti dinner.

We have this thing called "split-the-pot." This is where two guys go around ... and pressure you into handing them money. In the end ... if your number is drawn ----- you get some cash.

Well, they collect enough money so there will be 3 winners ----- each getting \$220. Pretty nice chunk of change.

Believe it or not ... the first winner is RUIZH SCHWARTZ ----- the "matriarch and boss" of Heartland Children's Home. She graciously gets up and says:

"I want this \$220 to go to Connor and his family."

A beautiful gesture. Well ... some goof sitting at my table responds:

"I guess that does it for all of us I hope my number isn't drawn ... heck, I wanted to keep the money for myself!@!!"

I'm happy to share with you ... when I drop by to see Connor tomorrow ... he will be \$660 richer than he is today!!

Yes, the sun rose this morning.

The birds are coming back ... and flying freely.

The lilies are beautiful.

And ... ***when we give unto at least one other person ... at least for a moment: ALL IS RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.***

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

February 27, 2011

www.allsaintsjoy.com

allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net

708-448-2939