

Sermon: May 1, 2011  
"OOZING GOODNESS"

My heart and soul are full of thoughts about what's going on in the world.

\*If our church was located in Cairo, IL ... chances are we wouldn't be able to get into the building.

\*If we were in certain parts of Alabama ... our building may not even be here.

\*I looked at Jude's and my humble house ... some people have lost everything ---- their homes included.

\*I looked at Quinton ... quietly sleeping in the comfort of his bed. What if he had been born in Libya ...  
no telling what his life would be like.

\*I think of our Catholic brothers and sisters in the parish of St. Sabina. Their priest of 30+ years has been suspended. Now there is uncertainty and unrest ... it's one thing people in the parish don't need.

\*I think of the millions gathered to celebrate the "beatification" of Pope John ... on his way to "sainthood."  
I'm reminded of all the behind-the-scene-saints who do the "work of the Lord" without even knowing it.

I just love being in the presence of someone who "oooozes goodness." We probably all know a person or two for whom GIVING ----- is not something you do once-in-a-while ... rather it's the way this person lives every day. Yesterday ... here at the church ... reminded me of this. Hey ... come out and hang with us here on a Saturday ---- it's fun!!

*\*a guy in the kitchen ... getting things ready for our ladies this afternoon. Watching Howard in the kitchen is like being in the presence of an artist.*

*\*the lawn guys ----- unbelievable ... for 25 years they've done nothing but "give" ... so our place can "stand tall" when you come on Sunday.*

*\*a lady who brings flowers for our lunch today ... but refuses to take any money.*

*\*a young lady who makes a couple wrong turns ... so, she is working-off her community service hours here ... she plunges herself into cleaning this place ---- with all her soul, all her heart ... it's all about "giving something back."*

It's just plain FUN being around "givers" ...

It's energizing. It's Jesus-like. It's powerful.

You can feel Jesus ... you feel linked to a "higher power" ... you are in touch with what's good about life.

Then ... you, in turn, want to be a giver and make a difference.

It's so easy ... in life ... to be NEGATIVE. For sure ... there is a lot in the world to be "negative" about.

So easy to doubt.

So easy to get down on yourself.

This time of the year ... I always think of a young man named Jon.

We all have doubts, don't we? It's the message of today's gospel. Here is a guy who followed Jesus for 3 years. And then when Jesus does exactly what he said he would do --- i.e., rise from the dead --- THOMAS DOUBTS. HE WANTS PROOF!!

It's the way life is. When you live life with passion ... when you live and work and play with intensity and grit ... well, there will be times when you DOUBT. As humans ... we often "doubt" the very people, things, and beliefs that are most dear to us. "Doubting" isn't a sign of weakness ... it's part of what happens when you live with passion. When you believe with all your heart ... when you give every day from the very depths of your humanity ... there will be times when the *well runs dry ... and you wonder where the strength will come from to get back at it tomorrow.*

You can be a teen-ager ... who is successful and has the admiration of almost everyone.

You may be in the middle of your life ... and you seem to have accomplished all you ever wanted to.

Maybe you are older ... and you look back to where you have been.  
WE ALL GET WEARY ... WE ALL GET WORN-DOWN.  
WE ALL DOUBT ..... and we want the doubts to disappear NOW!!

When you are "down" ... never be afraid to ask for help.

When you feel strong ... remember to reach-out to those who need a good dose of your strength.

You just never know when you will be the "medicine" that turns another person's life around.

The best text-book is "daily life."

Some people think the Bible is some book God magically plopps down in front of us ..... and all we have to do is follow it and life will be "ok."

No. The Bible has its roots in the daily struggles of God's people ... and how they see God "come alive" in the journeys they take everyday.

When Jon Diericks left this world at the all-too-young age of 17 ... instead of "going into the tomb" ... his parents went back into the world ... they talked about Jon's life and death ... and Jon's journey became a text-book for what it takes to live in this world ... and, in a bitter-sweet way, Jon still "teaches" us today.

When Adam Allsot died some 17 years ago of a terminal illness ... his parents didn't go "into the tomb." Rather ... they wanted people to know what a difference the church and faith can make when we have to say "good-bye" to someone so young and precious. Not a day goes by when I don't think about Adam and the impact his life has had on so many.

That why ... when Patrick Mackey died at the age of 28 ... his parents wanted "the world to know" ----- mental illness is NOT a secret. It's a part of life ... and it never helps to pretend or to hide it. This is why 60 bikers will be here in two weeks ----- to keep Patrick's memory and spirit alive ... and to challenge all of us to face our humanity with courage and faith.

All this "stuff" re-enforces what is so important ...

***Jesus is as real as every tree that blooms.  
He is as close as a young man named Sterling ... whose journey ended too soon.  
Jesus is as real as the air we breathe.***

**EASTER WAS LAST SUNDAY.**

**THE MESSAGE OF HOPE GETS MORE REAL EVERYDAY.**

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