



# Living in the Resurrection

Homily for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday  
April 23, 2017

1. Last Sunday, Easter Sunday, all of us were shocked and dismayed to hear of the brutal slaying of 74 year old grandfather, Robert Godwin, Sr. on E. 93<sup>rd</sup> and Kinsman Rd. in CLE
  - broadcast on Facebook Live, the inconceivable event soon became international news
  - the joy of Easter Sunday was shattered by shock, dismay, disgust and bewilderment
  - how could someone be so cold, calculated and public about what he was to do?
  - What goes through the mind of someone so demented? so disturbed?
  - Did he seek attention? Was he looking for recognition?
  - In trying to come to grips with such a horrific situation I happened across an editorial from a website
  - it said that Steve Stephens had already died before he took the life of Godwin
  - the writer went on to say that death was already at work in Stephens life so as to render someone else's world lifeless, an innocent man, just picking up aluminum cans on an Easter Sunday afternoon
  - reasoning that no human being, valuing the gift of new life and living in the joy of it, could stoop so low unless death were at hold already in him
2. I couldn't help but think of the contrast from today's readings
  - as Jesus breathes on the disciples in the Upper Room and the life he breathes into them changes everything
  - it takes us back to the creation of the first man, Adam, when God breathed into him the gift and blessing of life
  - it enabled them to be sent into the world fearlessly as missionaries and disciples to share Good News
  - the power of Christ's presence broke through locked doors, shattered the shackles of fear, and empowered the nervous and anxious witnesses
  - the beauty of John's Gospel is that the disciples are unnamed and unnumbered
  - and perhaps because John wants us to be among the disciples in that Upper Room
  - receivers of the Spirit of God breathing into us that same peace
3. Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so much more than simply believing in an amazing fact
  - the Scriptures remind us that belief in Jesus' resurrection is accepting and participating in a relationship that enlivens every part of our lives – now and forever
  - living a Resurrected life means that we carry within us joy, hope, peace, blessing, purpose, meaning, mission – we carry within us Christ risen from the dead

- Good Friday and death's power does not have permanent hold on us
  - Easter enables a new creation; a frightened people are empowered to live out Jesus' mission of sharing the life of God in imitation of Jesus
  - these words were written that we might not give in to grief, but that we might believe, and through this belief, have life in His name
4. The Acts of the Apostles gives us a concrete example of how that faith is lived
    - this is a summary and a model of community life
    - of a community dedicated to the teaching of the apostles, to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the remembrance of Jesus, to the prayers
    - we gathered yesterday, over 500 strong to dedicate ourselves to serving the local community
    - to remember our blessings and our responsibilities to one another
    - to bring hope, to inspire confidence in the human spirit, to be God's blessing to those in need
    - 22 couples are dedicating this weekend to their marriages; to recognizing the need for healing and to strengthen the bond between them as the model of Christ's love for us, the Church
  5. Yet, we also know how strongly death's grip has hold of our world
    - today, we commemorate Awareness Sunday in the Diocese of Cleveland
      - mindful of how much heroin and opiate addiction continues to afflict so many people
      - and has robbed our region and our nation of so many lives
    - the world too filled with war, and violence, and the killing of innocents shakes our core
    - poverty and homelessness plague so many who struggle for daily bread and for shelter
  6. However, if you wish not to be overcome by death's hold on you
    - then you must let Jesus breathe into you a new Spirit
  7. Robert Godwin's family had every right to be angry, to be spiteful, to be vindictive, to want justice
    - no one in the world would blame them for that
    - instead, their response was, "Each one of us forgives the killer, the murderer," said one of Godwin's daughters. "We want to wrap our arms around him."
    - "The thing that I would take away most from my father is he taught us about God, how to fear God, how to love God and how to forgive."
    - Death was obviously at work in Steve Stephen's life
    - but in other's – forgiveness – love
    - the kind of forgiveness that Divine Mercy and Resurrection is all about and in which we are called to live