



Home for Everyone

13th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A
July 2, 2017 – 5:00 p.m., 10:00 a.m.

1. When my niece Cailin was a little girl, I used to babysit a lot
 - her favorite movie back then was the animated 1991 version of Beauty and the Beast
 - we watched it over and over again
 - so you can imagine that when the 2016 live-action adaption of the movie came out, I wanted to revisit the film
 - and 26 years later, I watched the film from a different perspective, a decidedly Catholic perspective
 - Noticing that Belle and her father were misfits, odd ducks, strange and unordinary
 - Belle finds solace in the sacristy of a Catholic church, where the priest, played by a black actor, welcomes her and finds a way to connect with her – helping her to expand her world
 - Belle who longs for “adventure in the great wide somewhere” is given an outlet in a place no one would ever expect, in the Catholic Church
 - the scene lasts only 30 seconds, but, at the beginning of the movie, it sets the tone for what follows
 - Throughout history, the Church has always been the biggest and sometimes only shelter for the “odd”.
 - age upon age society’s fools, sinners and misfits, beasts and outcasts have found their way to the one place that can make their small corners of the world “almost feel big” and for connecting all of us the universal, the infinite, the Divine, the only Beauty that can tame the Beast
2. The scene “Be Our Guest” is a testament to the lost art of hospitality
 - Belle is a stranger in the castle, in fact, a prisoner
 - yet Lumiere and Mrs. Potts take it upon themselves to make her as comfortable as possible
 - while we don’t live in enchanted castles, we are still commanded by God to extend hospitality to others
 - and our Scriptures today remind us of that very fact
3. In the ancient world hospitality was not a mere point of etiquette
 - it was a requirement for survival
 - the world was a perilous place – no Heineken, or Walmarts or 24/7 Giant Eagle stores
 - travelers depended upon the goodwill of others for food, shelter and necessary supplies while they were on a journey
 - strangers would not be exploited provided they posed no threat
 - and some people believed that Divine beings roamed the earth in search of examples

of human graciousness

- Hebrews 13:2 reminds us “do not neglect hospitality, for through it some unknowingly entertained angels.”

4. Today’s readings include examples of ancient hospitality
 - they also mention the rewards for those who practice it
 - the woman of influence from Shumen showed hospitality to Elisha and she is promised a son
 - she provided for the prophet; he, in turn, provided for her
5. In the Gospel, Jesus instructs his followers on the need for hospitality
 - Jesus talks about openhearted hospitality extended to the disciples as ministers of the Gospel
 - he says, “whoever receives you, receives me.”
 - the hospitality spoken of here is more than the ancient custom that was necessary for survival in a perilous world
6. The “little ones” of whom Jesus spoke of are not children
 - the “little ones” are all those misfits, odd ducks, the strange and the unordinary that find acceptance, love, compassion, and welcome in the Church
 - a Church for rich and for poor, for black and white, for the stranger and the orphan, for the gay and the straight, for the prestigious and for the lowly, for the immigrant and the prisoner
 - where all people belong as a part of the bigger picture – a world not limited by provincial and polarizing views
 - but one which opens us up to new possibilities and worlds
7. The Church is a place where beauty and love transforms lives
 - against the backdrop of the crucifix
 - the Divine presence of God changes hearts
 - here where people can experience peace, joy, awe, wonder and hope of a world made new, forever changed by a love which knew no bounds or limits
 - by a sacrificial offering which is celebrated, remembered and valued as a means to change the world
 - and all of us are ministers of that hospitality and welcome
 - the way we greet one another here; the way we minister to the poor, the incarcerated, the sinner, the young, the old, the frail and the strong
 - the Church – shelter for the outcast, refuge for the poor, sanctuary for the misfit
8. The power of love can transform the world
 - beauty can change the ugliness of sin
 - hospitality can warm the coldest of hearts
 - and the promise of heaven can make our small corner of the world almost feel big
 - we must be a Church big enough for ourselves, for others, and for God