

## Father Tom's Homily - Sixth Sunday of Easter 2020

A number of years ago, I joined a Prayer Group for priests which made up of seven members and met once a month for prayer, reflection on the month and mutual support. We, you and I, all need people to pray with and support us in our faith, particularly people who face similar challenges as us. I recall one of the priests who shared on how sometimes our spiritual lives are broken, but most of the time our spiritual lives are just messy. Not just for us priests or religious, quite often, all of us go about things in the wrong way or "off the beaten track". Quite often we approach God on OUR terms instead of HIS. In addition, we zigzag in our approach to our final union with Him. We do not realise that actually God sees us as we are, trying our best; maybe at times, a bit messy in our spirituality.

Maybe among us all; our health, career, job, marriage, children, family did not turn out as we wished. Maybe your career took a diversion, perhaps not once but twice or seven times. Or else, we made some bad choices in the past that have left their impact on our lives now. We may all have situations that might lead us to think that we are broken, but we are NOT. Why not? Because we have our faith and our God to lean on. When we play the role as spiritual instruments in our lives, do you know what God hears?

*Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.*

*Always be ready to give an explanation*

*To anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.*

Those words come from today's second reading. Peter was a clown who tried to walk out on water towards Jesus but nearly drowned because he lost faith. He often boasted who denied the Lord three times. But Peter always strive to be better. He wanted to serve Jesus. Eventually, through God's grace, he conquered his fears; he controlled his emotions; he became the first Vicar of Christ.

We have a purpose and hope. That fundamental reason is Jesus Christ. He loves us more than we can possibly imagine each of us. He is not concerned whether we produce the perfect result. He is overjoyed simply in that we are trying to be our best we can be, the give and to serve everything we can. How can we do this? With all the modern distractions in life, how do we keep our Christian focus on our faith? We do this by dedicating ourselves to the truth. Today's Gospel message is core to our faith values, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments...I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you."

When we talk about truth, we may consider it as simply not telling a lie. That is not sufficient. Truth is more than the opposite of saying something that is false. Truth is a way of life. Living the truth gives us the ability to live an authentic life. Please allow me to elaborate. When we focus in on ourselves and self-gratifying or self-glorifying the goal of our personal lives, we are living a lie with selfishness; as this only makes ourselves happy. On the other hand, when we focus on sacrificial love, we are living a genuine and true personal life. When we commit ourselves to the sacrificial love of the Lord, we are living the profound Truth that happiness comes from Him alone. Only God needs to know what we have done. We do not need praises or awards or recognition.

Today's readings speak about joy. There is the joy that new Christians in Samaria had after Philip baptized them. There is the joy that St Peter tells us is the reason for our hope. There is the joy that Jesus says comes from the Love of the Father. The Psalm reemphasizes the message of joy, "Let all the earth cry out to God with JOY."

We Christians are truly eternal optimists. We may be dying of cancer, or in challenging family situations or relationships, or financially hurting. We fear not as no matter what the situation, we know that if we are true to Christ, He will always be the source of our joy. We may be a mess, but as long as we are trying our best, God sees the determined effort. He hears the joy of good music in our lives; our tender heavenly Father loves us unconditionally and forgives us.