

Chaplain's Bulletin April 14, 2024



Dear Folks,

Story telling is one of the most basic human activities. We take tidbits of experience and weave it into a narrative. We don't see directly into people's minds, but we see their actions and hear their words, and put them together like puzzle pieces to get a picture of what they are like. We decide some people are our friends and others are not. Sometimes we can be mistaken, and someone who had acted friendly had been trying to take advantage of us.

In detective movies we see events, details and conversations, and in the end, the detective typically calls everyone together, weaves those tidbits into a narrative describing what happened, and reveals the killer. If the movie is well done, we say to ourselves that we remember those things, why didn't we put them together?

In the Easter readings, we see people's experience of the risen Jesus. Jesus explained how the Old Testament led up to the Gospel (Luke 24:27, 45-47). Earlier, Jesus suggested to scholars that the Old Testament pointed to His story, but they didn't get it (John 5:39).

All creation was made through Jesus and for Jesus (Colossians 1:16), so all stories lead to Jesus. It is a matter of putting together the puzzle pieces. We have to start where people are at. We remember that St. Paul told the Gospel story one way to Greek philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:22-34) and another way to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 22).

If we want to tell the Gospel story, or a part of it, to someone, it really helps to hear their story first. It would be useful to know what experiences they've had with religion in general and Christianity specifically. Were they taught anything? Were they taught so poorly that they couldn't recognize any goodness, beauty, or truth in it? Did they find it silly or trivial? Were they hurt or disillusioned? What do they believe strongly? What is important to them?

Sharing our knowledge of the Faith and our personal experience in a way that might be meaningful to others is more art than science. Most of us are not practiced in it, but we can learn, and that will be helpful to fulfill Jesus' mandate to be his witnesses (Luke 24:48; Matthew 28:19-20). We can start by asking ourselves: Why is the faith precious to us? What strikes our hearts most powerfully? How are our lives different because of it? What have been our good experiences? What have been our bad experiences? What have they taught us?

We are an Easter people. Let us rejoice!

Blessings,
Fr. Jim