

Introductions:

Bishop McManus

Bishop Riley

Bishop Rueger

Brother priests and deacons and religious;

Msgr. Lou's family and friends and his family that is also St. Roch's Parish community.

Before I continue on with my homily and because of the age of technology in which we live, may I remind everyone to turn off their cell phones? Lou wasn't a big fan of the phone that went off during mass. Unless, of course, your ring tone is the Notre Dame fight song!

That we are all together today says more about our faith in the promise of Jesus Christ than any of us can begin to understand. We may think we have a certain grasp of our faith; however, it is the duty of the finite human to stand in total humility before the infinite God.

Each day we are called to enter into that sacred act called remembering. Each day we are called to remember the one who has called us out of darkness and into a most marvelous light. We are called to remember, by command, Jesus the Christ, the anointed one of God.

And yet today, we have come to celebrate the very mystery into which we have all been baptized: the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Each one of us will experience death.

How we have lived our faith will determine the quality of that experience.

As we went through these final days with Louis, it became increasingly apparent, as it always does in these situations, which Lou was at that moment which every his every act of faith had prepared him for. As our Lord surrendered himself to the Father on the cross of for our salvation, Lou surrendered himself to the Father. It was not done with great drama. It was quick, it was confident and it was joyfully peaceful.

It was suggested that we use what is commonly known at the Emmaus story for today's gospel as Lou preached it very often in these circumstances. So it is fitting that we gather around the altar table at which our Lord is recognized in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. It is fitting not only because as a priest he carried out this sacrifice but as an educator, dreamer, preacher, and faithful servant he showed us how to live as Jesus did.

I must tell you that the priesthood and the diaconate affords us countless opportunities to enter the lives of so many people. That is why we who are clergy must never forget the privilege that we have been given is because of who Jesus is and not because of who we think we are. Louis knew this and lived it very well. Perfectly? No. Well? Yes. From the depths of his heart, the very marrow of his bone, he knew that if you told people about Jesus they would know who you are.

There are many stories about Lou that have been told and will continue to be told over the days and months and even years ahead. Let's face it; some of them are really funny and more to the point, even true!

One time, after returning to Oxford after a visit to his beloved home in Florida he told me about an encounter that he had with a couple he met on the beach in Naples. Duh! Where else!

It was a powerful encounter with folks who had become disenchanted with many things and challenged him about being a priest and their own search for meaning in their lives. After all was said and done, he brought them to the conclusion that all of life depends on our ability to see such life with the eyes of faith. It was an Emmaus moment.

"See," he said to me, "I told you, I can evangelize anywhere!" To which I replied, "Are you rehearsing that speech for me or for the Bishop?"

From the infant to the elder, the poor to the wealthy, the marginalized to the elite, regardless of orientation or station in life, Louis knew that because of his calling to the priesthood, entering the lives of others, was sacred because Jesus called him to do so. It was never about him, it was, and remains about Jesus.

Many of us, Lou's friends and family, have met each other for the first time over these days. We have heard for ourselves the stories of Lou and come to the common denominator; Jesus. So many folks have told stories of how their lives had been changed because of something Lou said or did at a critical or joyful moment in your lives. For in the telling of the story we know we are one with him. That is why, in the simplest of understanding, we know that Jesus is with us as, the disciples found out at Emmaus in that great act of the breaking the bread and sharing the cup. After all, whether it is the unifying priesthood we all share in baptism or the ordained priesthood called to lead the church, we are Eucharist in action to the world. Not contained in the buildings but expressed worldwide in acts of mercy and compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We who are downcast, we who are taken aback by the unknowing person who asks us about our sadness, must do as Jesus did, tell the stories that help others understand who we are. We must tell folks that even in our grief, we turn to joy

and laughter because of what we saw in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. It is lived out from this altar and every altar so that we may be nourished and go into a world so desperately in need of the joy that only Jesus can offer. And Jesus didn't choose perfection, he chose the human who can listen and has the ability to see Eucharist present in his or her midst.

I will end with a poem entitled, The Servant Girl at Emmaus After a painting by Velazquez. The poet is Denise Levertov. As you listen, put yourself in the place of the servant girl and remember, as you have related to me over these days that when Louis spoke of faith to you, you were sure there was something greater than he doing the speaking:

“She listens, listens, holding
her breath. Surely that voice
is his - the one who had looked at her, once, across the crowd,
as no one ever had looked?
Had seen her? Had spoken as if to her?

Surely those hands were his,
taking the platter of bread from hers just now?
Hands he'd laid on the dying and made them well?

Surely that face - ?

The man they'd crucified for sedition and blasphemy.
The man whose body disappeared from its tomb.
The man it was rumored now some women had seen this morning, alive?

Those who had brought this stranger home to their table
don't recognize yet with whom they sit.
But she in the kitchen, absently touching the wine jug she's to take in,
a young Black servant intently listening,

wings round and sees
the light around him
and is sure.”

Louis, we are sure. It was Jesus whom you dared to reveal to us all, in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. The light was not yours, you always knew it was the Lord. Thank you.