

**Homily**  
**Trinity Sunday - A**

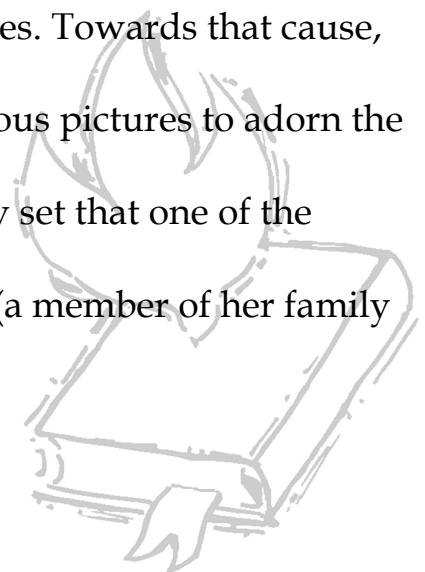
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
May 30-31, 2020

Ex 34: 4-6, 8-9  
Dn 3: 52, 53, 55, 56  
2 Cor 13: 11-13  
Jn 3: 16-18

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In the world of “no good deed goes unpunished...”

A couple of weeks ago, I was visiting the sisters of the Annunciation Monastery (The Poor Clares of Minooka), with whom I lived for a year while on sabbatical. The sisters of the monastery have been exceedingly generous both for my soul, for my well-being, and for the people that I serve. Over at St. Patrick’s Church in Momence (where we were renovating one of the three rectories under my care) – I decided that I am more like Bob Vila or Norm Abrams than I am anything else – we have been undergoing a great deal of rectory renovations this first year of ministry in the Kankakee border town parishes. Towards that cause, the Poor Clare Sisters donated over thirty religious pictures to adorn the walls of the house, as well as a beautiful nativity set that one of the sisters told me was an heirloom of her family’s (a member of her family



actually made the clothing for the statues in that nativity). The sisters have been exceedingly kind, both to me and to the people I serve.

A couple of weeks ago, the sisters had asked me if I would celebrate a special Mass for them on a Saturday morning. Because of their dedication to pray for the priests, the religious and the people in this diocese, I was honored to do so. As a result, I drove that hour trip over to their house to celebrate this Mass for them. At the conclusion of this Mass, the sisters decided to gift me with a great deal of food for the people in Hopkins Park (the location of my online Mass this weekend). The sisters donated a great deal of fresh produce, consisting of milk, eggs, lettuce, vegetables and fruits. Retired priest Fr. Ray Lescher (who lives in Hopkins Park and celebrates Mass for the Sacred Heart community) was kind enough to take all this produce and distributed among the poor of this area.

At this special Mass was a person whose family very much supports the work of the Poor Clares – this family was responsible for the chapel renovations that had taken place over the last month. After I celebrated

this Mass, this family was kind enough to donate a \$1,000 check on behalf of the people at Hopkins Park so that we could take care of the people's needs (which we certainly did!).

Over at the mission at Hopkins Park, there are great number of people and churches, as well as other groups that quietly have assisted in the care and well-being of the people of this community, both with prayers, food and a volunteer spirit for those who live in this community. Because of the "Stay at Home," many of those individuals who are very much in need have not been able to spend time in this Church, their place of solace with God.

Over the last few months, a volunteer from Joliet named Wally Martin has been travelling to our neck of the woods to help with the renovations of all three houses in the border town area. Because a neighboring parish was not able to pay for or install a laminate floor in our convent, St. Patrick's Church in Momence paid the \$6,000 cost of the floor and Wally volunteered his time to what amounted to \$4,000 in service for the floor's installation.



Towards the Hopkins' convent project, St. Pat's has paid for numerous dumpsters that have been filled with refuse from the area to

clean up the property. Before the Stay-at-Home was enforced, a group of confirmation teens from St. Patrick's Church in Joliet were instrumental in helping empty that convent of its refuse, as were many of the parishioners in the border town parishes. The confirmation students worked with Wally Martin and Jack Noonan to remove floorboards and to paint the walls of the building. At the time of this homily, Wally is in the process of finishing up the project for us.



The other group of teens that perpetually have made their presence felt in the Pembroke community has been the youth group of the "Hearts of

Hope" group from Kankakee and the surrounding area. Ken and Michelle Barrie have been the leaders of this group for over twenty



years. Michelle ministers at Bishop McNamara school; she and husband Ken also associate themselves with a great number of parishes in the area

(specifically St. Joseph's Church in Bradley, as well as St. Patrick's and St. John Paul II Churches in Kankakee). Ken & Michelle established "Hearts of Hope" with a specific mission to take care of the people in need here at Sacred Heart and at the St. Paul the Greater Baptist Church right next door to the Catholic Church (Reverend Kenneth Staples is the pastor there).

On behalf of both churches, the teenagers from "Hearts of Hope" have built two pavilions, one for Sacred Heart and one for St. Paul the Greater. During the summer last year, Sacred Heart endured so much flooding damage to the basement that the teens were relegated to sleeping upstairs in the chapel where I am celebrating the online Mass this weekend. So that the kids could sleep in the chapel, we removed the Blessed Sacrament from the worship space and gave the teenage boys a

place to sleep while on mission. As for the teen girls Reverend Staples was kind enough to lend out the Baptist church for the same cause. In addition to the teens sleeping in the two chapels, Ken & Michelle created an outdoor shower so that the teens could take care of themselves while on mission (thank God for outdoor plumbing!).

The teens from “Hearts of Hope” have been coming to Sacred Heart year in and year out to do great service for the people of Hopkins. The whole point of their ministry is to learn that if they work with the poor, if *we* work for those who are in need of the basic resources in life, we all are living the same kind of mission that Christ has instructed us to live (Mt 25: 31-46).

It makes no sense for Christ to pass on the Holy Spirit, to pass on the Paraclete, to pass on the Advocate if we’re not doing anything with this gift. This is the whole point of Trinity Sunday, to remind ourselves that a Father and a Son, a lover and a beloved, are united together by love itself (*“Wherever there is love there is a Trinity; a lover, a beloved and a fountain of love” – St. Augustine*). If we understand what St. Augustine is

telling us, what St. Thomas is telling us, what the Church is teaching us through the book of Genesis [*“And God said, ‘Let us make man in Our image (= the Son), according to Our likeness (= the Holy Spirit)’”* – Gen 1: 26], that God made us through n his image, through his likeness, if we understand Jesus’ commission of the apostles in the gospel of Matthew (*“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”* – Mt 28: 18-20), if we understand what this means, then we have an obligation to take care of those in need and model the life of the Trinity – the lover and the beloved, united by love itself.

At the time I’m celebrating this Mass, the family of Rosaura Vanegas has contacted me. This family was instrumental in building the Hispanic community in the last parish I served. One of the family members represented the parish’s St. Vincent DePaul Society by spending a month in Texas and Florida with those who lost houses from a terrible hurricane and helped them acquire resources for the sake of their families. Rosaura contacted me and told me that she asked my

parishioners to keep us in their family's prayers and she would certainly keep our intention in hers.

I also received a call last week from a man named Dan Green, whose son Christopher passed away and was not afforded a proper Christian funeral. Over the years, Dan had been exceedingly kind over at the last parish I served in so many different projects. I promised Dan that I would offer a memorial service for his son here in this area because the family was suffering terribly. Dan has asked us to pray for Christopher which I ask you all to do on his behalf

In this area where I serve, Rosemary Foster constantly encourages me to keep focusing on the needs of this community and certainly that is what we want to do. Father Ray Lescher, Sr. Marybeth Clements and the good people at Hopkins who are ministering with me over at the Jerome Combs Detention Center in Kankakee on behalf of undocumented immigrants being exported from this country. So many folks in the cause of faith are living out the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel; so many folks have followed the Lord's commission in Matthew



28 to make disciples of the nations. In this cause, we know that the Lord is with us until the end of the age, united together with the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are doing the best we can to take care of the needs of the poor.

Fr. Ray had told me earlier today he was reading the writings of Karl Rahner and that a passage from his writings that really stuck with Fr. Ray was that by doing Christ's ministry, we are doing the ministry of failure. Fr. Ray explained to me that in his own interpretation of ministry, Christ appears to have failed in his ministry, according to the secular view of our Lord on the cross. To the secular way of thinking, Jesus lost; the Lord was crucified. We also know as people of faith that the Lord really *did not lose*. As a people of faith, we might feel oppressed in every age. Whatever the problems are in the world, we are always going to encounter violence; we are always going to encounter discrimination. We are always going to have these kinds of problems, no matter who the community is at. The Catholic Church has encountered a

type of discrimination through this “Stay at Home” order and the First Amendment.

We have an obligation *to live like Christ*, to minister to those who are suffering, to minister to those who are need, to pray for those who have been mistreated or have been misguided, especially those in our own community. When you see the teenagers from “Hearts of Hope” or St. Patrick’s in Joliet or the various service groups that have come here to help, or even the Poor Clares of the Annunciation monastery who pray for people like us every single day, we are united together with that same Spirit. When we are united in the Spirit and we are doing God’s work, we see that reflection of the Trinity.

We say that husband and wife model that Trinity the most, a Spirit that unites two people together so that the two have become one, more than one. The image of Christian marriage is the best physical manifestation we have of the image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit united together. That said, every time we live the gospel message, we are modeling in a small way that same kind of life.

Let us continue modeling this life of the Trinity. Please support our parishes, if not financially, then certainly spiritually. Say a prayer for those in need; pray for those who are lonely or depressed. With the Stay-at-Home, we should not primarily focus on saving lives and not catching the virus. We also have to talk saving souls, especially in regard to people who are at home or alone, depressed people who are dealing with abuses and all those kinds of things that result from loneliness, people who don't know that they are loved and they are cared for.

That's where we have the Sunshine Phone Callers; that is why we have people of faith praying every single day for those in need (as I am doing for all of you). Let us do our part in building the body of Christ. Let's us each do our part from allowing the Spirit to shine through us by offering that spirit, that love, to the people we meet, in thanksgiving for all of those who have modeled this kind of life here at Hopkins Park and in all communities throughout the diocese, country and throughout the world. May God bless all of you. This is our prayer.