

Homily
3rd Sunday of Easter
May 1, 2022

“Some things in life are bad. They can really make you mad. Other things just make you swear and curse. When you're chewing on life's gristle, don't grumble, give a whistle and this'll help things turn out for the best. And always look on the bright side of life.” – *Monty Python, “Always Look on The Bright Side Of Life,” The Life Of Brian.*

Some of you may recognize the opening verse of the final song in Monty Python's film, “Life of Brian.” There is always another way of looking at our circumstances. Whether I am a positive person who sees the best in a situation or a negative person who seems to only look at the downside of things, every situation has several takeaways depending on how I look at it.

You may have heard the story about a farmer and his horse which ran away. The story is known as, “Who knows what is good or bad.” The summary of the story is that each instance of events can either be good or bad, depending on how you look at it and how circumstances unfold. But the message is clear, “Who knows what is good or bad?”

The farmer's new horse ran away. The neighbor said, “bad luck my friend.” The farmer said, “Who knows what is good or bad?” The next day, the farmer's horse returns with 6 wild horses. The neighbor said, “good luck my friend.” The farmer said, “Who knows what is good or bad?” The next day, the farmer's son broke his leg while taming the wild horses. The neighbor said, “bad luck my friend.” The farmer said, “Who knows what is good or bad?” And on and on it goes. You get the idea. Who knows what is good or bad?

For some insight on that question, we only need to go to the beginning, to Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 1, “In the beginning when God created the Heavens and the Earth...” It goes on to say He created light, then the sky, then the dry land and the sea, then vegetation, then the stars and the sun in the sky, then the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and animals, wild and tame, on the land. Then God created mankind, male and female, in His image. He then blessed us and gave us dominion over all the earth, to care for it, cultivate it, grow it, and produce, that is, be productive, be creative. And looking at all He had made, He found it very good. That's the key. All he created is very good.

Everything we can see, feel, touch, smell, taste, all of this is very good, because God made it. God is good and God made everything, including us. In fact, we are made in His image. He is the Creator and we, His created, are called to be creative in this world. And because of this, we are very good.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reveals Himself to His disciples, but they don't see Him, at least, not at first. It wasn't until they experienced a familiar miracle that they saw Him.

When do we see Jesus? When do we know He is here, with us? Even the rocks, the wind and the waters know! All creation knows Jesus; He created them. He created us! So how is it that we have such a hard time seeing Jesus? How is it that we struggle to hear, feel, smell, taste Jesus?

I believe it goes back to that gift, that blessing and that curse, of Free Will. We are free to choose what to look at, what to think about, what to focus on. And with a properly formed conscience, we will look at, think about and focus on that which is good. Tainted with Original Sin (thank you very much, Adam and Eve) we tend to look at, think about, and focus on that which is less than good. We call this a disordered view of things. But, it's still a choice.

What about those times when things truly are bad? Sometimes, oftentimes, we are surrounded by sickness, disease, death. We experience troubling times, challenging events, that make us question the good around us. It is then we need to embrace what our Bishop has expressed in his episcopal motto: In All Things Give Thanks! At all times, whether good or bad, pray. Pray hard. Pray and give thanks. Look to Jesus and give thanks.

Will it take a familiar miracle, such as the consecration of simple bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord and Savior to see Him? Will it take looking at those devotionals we have around the house, such as a crucifix or a picture of His Sacred Heart? Will it take focusing on our morning prayer or our prayer before a meal to sense that Jesus is truly present? Will it take feeling those Rosary beads in our pocket or purse? Will it take tasting what tastes like bread but is truly the very Body of Christ to see Him?

The reality is: Jesus is always around us. In fact, He is around us, inside us, over us, beside us, beneath us, whether we are aware of it or not, whether we believe it or not. And right next to us is our Guardian Angel guiding us, protecting us. And all around us are the angels and saints, praying for us, watching over us. We are surrounded by God's Good Creation everywhere and all the time. We just need to remember it, to keep it front and center in our lives, what we look at, what we think about, what we focus on. That's what Jesus means when He tells us to pray constantly.

Maybe it will be easier to always look at the bright side of life when we remember and know that we are surrounded by all that is Good.