

Sermon

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Acts 2:14, 36-41*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *1 Peter 2: 20-25*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *John 10:1-10*

Did you ever wonder about your spiritual part? “MY WHAT”?? In the course of daily life we sometimes kindly enquire about another person’s health? “How’s Tom these days?, will he ever get better?”. We usually enquire about peoples physical well being, a perfectly noble enquiry! But we human beings are much more than just the physical ; we are made up of 4 components, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual ; we rarely hear about emotional illness, we express this at times by saying something like “after all these years Mary is still upset by her husband’s sudden death, she’s never gotten over it” ; obviously Mary is unwell emotionally!! We need to explore more of these emotional upsets, especially the ones where the pain doesn’t diminish, or better said, where healing seems to be seriously delayed.

People who are now well and healed of an addiction have a lot to teach us about emotional health, they’ve been to hell and back ; these same people would also have a lot to say on spiritual wellbeing ; our spiritual and emotional components seem to strengthen each other ; if you enjoy good mental health, then you can think straight and work things out like a normal human being, you may well ask “...AND WHAT IS A NORMAL HUMAN BEING??”, the experts tell us, if you can love, work and play, then you are normal (“play” as in, to be able to relax, rest and enjoy something) ;

Which of the 4 components would you say is the more important one??, or are they all suppose to work together harmoniously?? ; an interesting question!!

Perhaps it would be good to define the nature of us human beings, would you agree that our nature is spiritual?? And that each of us has a soul? If you turn to page 42 of the Catholic Compendium, #70, you'll see a question and answer!

WHERE DOES THE SOUL COME FROM? answer THE SPIRITUAL SOUL DOES NOT COME FROM ONE'S PARENTS BUT IS CREATED IMMEDIATELY BY GOD AND IS IMMORTAL. THE SOUL DOES NOT PERISH AT THE MOMENT WHEN IT IS SEPARATED FROM THE BODY IN DEATH AND IT WILL BE ONCE AGAIN REUNITED WITH THE BODY AT THE MOMENT OF THE FINAL RESURRECTION

If that be the case and, as people of Faith, an obvious question arises ;

HOW WELL DO YOU AND I TAKE CARE OF OUR SOUL? Or to put it more generally ARE YOU AND I SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY?? ;

For most of us we are capable of taking care of our bodies, there's no shortage of beauty salons, go into central London with plenty of money on you, and pay someone to "make you look beautiful" eh!! physically of course!!, but it's doubtful if you'd find someone to make you beautiful spiritually, for the saints this was the work of a lifetime : by the way there are saints among us, surely you know one or two of them, watch and observe where their inner beauty comes from, their spiritual beauty is difficult to put into words, it's just there to behold and enjoy, what's their secret?? In this context such people hold no secrets, they don't have to announce that they have allowed the Holy Spirit to dominate their lives unconditionally ; they have freely allowed God to be their Shepherd and Guardian, and so they enjoy spiritual growth ;

In to-day's second reading from the First Letter of st.Peter, the apostle refers to Jesus as the One who can help us in caring for our soul, that very intimate part of our interior life where we may "open-the-door-from-the-inside" and allow in the Holy Spirit, also we are free not to invite in that same Spirit.

St.Peter states "YOU HAD GONE ASTRAY LIKE SHEEP BUT NOW YOU HAVE COME BACK TO THE SHEPHERD AND GUARDIAN OF YOUR SOULS"

So how well are you spiritually??, do you enjoy good spiritual health??, do you continue to allow Our Resurrected Saviour to be the Shepherd and Guardian of you soul?? Only you can answer these questions ; If you enjoy your spiritual life presently, then express extra gratitude to the Lord this Sunday, may many more blessings come your way!

BUT while you enjoy the blessings of spiritual wellbeing, and in the midst of this painful Pandemic, there are many who are not only close to bankruptcy, but are also spiritually bankrupt!! "spiritually WHAT??", for whatever their reason or reasons they don't connect spiritual wellbeing to the dire consequences of a worldwide pandemic, what can we do for them??, with our spiritual gifts we are bound to intercede for them whoever they are, pray for them, say hello to them, ask them their first name, tell them you'll pray for them, you may be pleasantly surprised, at least they have heard your encouraging words "..and I'll pray for you...", who knows??, those few simple words may ignite a spark of Faith and Hope in the heart of the recipient.....stay healthy, be well spiritually!!

In last week's "THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER" reflection, unfortunately I mistakenly left out the word "never" , in the 1st paragraph you read what my mother used to say "EXPECT NOTHING AND YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED", it should have read "EXPECT NOTHING AND YOU'LL NEVER BE DISAPPOINTED", Obviously the absence of "NEVER" completely altered the meaning of the quote.....not to worry!!!!!!

Fr Kieran A. Fitzharris SVD