

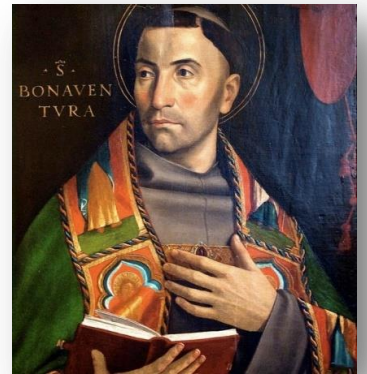
Compelled by Compassion; Transcending Self

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle C

For additional Homilies and writings, please see my website, www.JoyoftheWord.com

I. St. Bonaventure's Definition of Humanity

- a. 13th Century theologian, Minister General of the Franciscans, Cardinal, and Doctor of the Church, reflecting on the human person
- b. Notes that all of the universe is either material or spirit
- c. God, His angels, heaven is infinite, eternal, spiritual
- d. The earth finite, limited, material



- ## II. The human person occupies a unique, singular place in creation, indeed in all of the universe
- a. We are both material and spirit
 - b. We are finite, limited, and material
 - c. Yet made in the image of God, with a capacity to receive God, with our infinite, eternal soul
 - d. The human person, Bonaventure writes, is unique and singular to all of creation, on heaven and earth, for the human person is a microcosm of the universe itself.

- e. Like the universe, the human person is both body and spirit.¹
- III. The human emotion and virtue that demonstrates this most clearly, is compassion.
- a. We feel pain, suffering, pleasure, and joy of the human body, of our own individual flesh
 - b. Yet as infinite spirits, made in the image of God, we can transcend self, project those particular feelings out to another
 - c. As spiritual beings, we can transcend our own experience, and accept the pain and suffering of another as our own.
- IV. Corporal Manuel Jimenez
- a. Afghanistan
 - b. Debris from medical evacuation landing
 - c. Squad risks their lives, compelled by compassion²
- V. Alex Miller, young teen age girl in Idaho.
- a. Ultrasound everything changes
 - b. Didn't know it was a baby
 - c. Seeing changed everything, changed my life
 - d. Softening of heart and mind
 - e. Confidence in myself

¹ Delio, Ilia, O.S.F.; Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writing; Second Edition; New City Press of the Focolare; New York, New York; 2001.

² Blue, Victor J.; "A Warrior Comes Home"; Smithsonian; January|February 2019; pages 32-43.

- f. Stanton Healthcare Boise Idaho, Knights of Columbus ultrasound initiative – St. Catherine of Sienna Council³

VI. Frederick Police Officer Dotson May 25, 2017 fish hatchery road

- a. Overturned vehicle with occupants
- b. Water rushing into vehicle – rescued
- c. Still secure in seatbelt, individual under water
- d. Life saving award, and ribbon of honor, Nov 1⁴

VII. In each example, the soldiers, the young woman, the police officer, felt the pain and suffering of another, or the potential for pain and suffering, and transcended self, accepting the pains and sufferings of another as their own.

VIII. These are extreme examples, where the life of another is at stake

- a. but compassion is not measured by the act,
- b. but only by transcending self, and, out of love, suffering with another.
- c. Jesus tells us to think as God does, and not as human beings do
- d. Compassion is measured by the movement of the heart, and not the act itself

³ Internet Site; Knights of Columbus; Ultrasound Initiative; “The Difference and Ultrasound Makes;” copyright 2019, www.kofc.org; accessed March 30, 2019.

⁴ Internet site; “Minutes to the 1 November 2019 Public Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen”; www.cityoffrederick.org; accessed March 30, 2019.

- e. What matters to God is how fully you are compelled by compassion to transcend self, and share the fate of another.

Good news! In this parish, so many ways practice compassion

St. Teresa of Calcutta, famous motto, “Do small things with great love.



- f. “Do small things with great compassion.”
 - g. We’ve featured examples:
 - i. Caring Connections
 - ii. Homebound and Nursing Home Residents
 - iii. Deliver of meals
 - iv. Parish nurses
 - v. Immigrant Outreach Ministry
 - vi. Food bank donations
 - h. Read bulletin – Does something touch your heart
 - i. Jesus’ arm around you
- IX. Where does one start? Where does one start on this road home to compassion?
- X. It starts with today’s Gospel
- a. Jesus says, “While he (the prodigal son) was still a long way off, his Father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.

- b. Compelled by his compassion, the Father ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.
- c. Have confidence! The Father sees our hearts even while we are still a long way off, shares in our suffering, and runs to embrace and kiss us.

And it starts today with our heavenly Father's welcome home celebration for us, the feast of the Eucharist!

- d. Eucharist is a gift of grace, a memorial to Christ's passion, and His compassion for us
- e. A gift of grace that expands our hearts beyond our own self
- f. To offer ourselves as gift with the wine and bread,
- g. And open wide a new space in our hearts to feel the pain and suffering of another
- h. Eucharist – Christ's gift of grace to help us transcend self,
- i. And be compelled by compassion.