

Homily – Deacon Steve Moses

April 22, 2007

“The end depends upon the beginning”. How true that is with so much in life.

A sad example is sure to be the tragedy at Virginia Tech with the murders of so many people by one person with a troubled past.

It becomes easy to be discouraged and to ask ourselves; ‘how can evil be allowed by a loving God?’ We may even take it another step and find ourselves asking; ‘why am I here, what’s the point?’

My friends, when you and I were given the gift of life we also were given free will to make choices in this life.

The choices we make always impact more than just ourselves. We can, and often do, suffer the consequences of other people’s choices.

At the end of the Book of Job, after a long dialogue with God about the mysteries of suffering and evil—and not without considerable grumbling—Job finally says: *“I have dealt with great things that I do not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know”* (42:3).

Like Job, I too must admit I don’t have all the answers. But that’s not going to stop me from trying to make some sense out of life.

We are reminded in Romans that; *“the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.”* (4:12-13)

We know God is real, but so are evil and suffering.

Evil and suffering are not illusions. We see them everywhere, our head lines scream it, and our own hearts and minds know it.

What can we do about it? What choices do we have?

We have the freedom to choose God or to reject God.

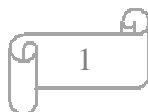
We have the freedom to choose light or darkness.

We have the freedom to choose to be the children of God, or to turn completely away from God and be embraced by darkness.

You and I have been given the great gift of life, and that has a meaning and purpose in itself.

We are here today because God loves us. God tells us in Jeremiah 1:5; *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...”*

We were created to be in friendship with God and to be a part of creation.



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The Psalmist proclaims *“How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.”*

Psalm 36:7

Within each of us is a longing to be loved and accepted for who we are with all our imperfections.

We want there to be meaning to our lives and to be happy with ourselves and those around us.

By a show of hands, how many have a good friend? Go ahead and raise your hand.

A good friend is a special gift. A person you can confide in, and person who accepts you, a person who you can share the good times and bad times with. A person you can trust. My good friend is my wife of over twenty years,

Take a moment now and think about your own friends, pick out a special friendship. It can be a new friend or a seasoned friend.

At the beginning, when you were simply acquaintances, what did you know about the other person? How did you find out more?

What were your thoughts and feelings when you first met?

Consider for a moment how your relationship transformed into one of friendship.

Isn't true we become friends only after we get to know each other, spend time together, share experiences and our feelings while building trust with each other.

Sometimes the friendship blossoms into love. Love and respect for each other.

The only way you and I can have an authentic friendship is to spend time with each other and work together at building the relationship.

Friendship takes work on our part.

This is true of our relationship with our God as well. It too takes some work on our part.

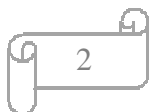
To help build a relationship with God we come together to worship in community, we pray, we may take time to meditate, we hear Gods word proclaimed and spend time learning about our sovereign King by reading the Bible.

St. Jerome said; “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”.

It's in the Bible we find volumes of information about who God is, and what God's relationship to humanity is all about.

We learn about the covenants God has made with us.

The Bible is our source material for what it means to know the Word made flesh, God incarnate through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.



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We come to know who Jesus is, and who God the Father is, by reading the letters, poems, psalms, history, and first hand accounts found in the Bible.

We come to learn about the hand of friendship extended by God to all who believe.

Simon Peter was a friend with our Lord. Peter was so sure of his friendship he said he was willing to die with Christ.

That friendship that was tested in dramatic fashion on the day he denied Christ three times.

But in the end, Peter with all his frailties and faults, proving he was only human just like you and me, was accepted for who he was by the Risen Christ.

Our Creator God knows all hearts, and his love is never ending.

Peter was redeemed beside the Sea of Tiberias by his three fold proclamation of love for Christ and by his willingness to follow Christ.

As Christians we are a people in relation with a God of justice and steadfast love.

God knows we fail. But God extends his hand to help us up and embraces us when we ask for forgiveness.

We were created to be in friendship with God and to be a part of creation.

It seems fitting on this day designated as 'Earth Day' to recall our important role in creation as stewards of the earth.

I'm sure you have all seen an image of our planet Earth from space, a blue marble swirling with white clouds, has become familiar.

Astronauts whose own eyes have seen this view speak of its power to change their deepest feelings and attitudes toward the world.

Saudi Arabian astronaut Sultan bin Salman al-Saud, part of an international crew on the space station, recollected that on, *"The first day we all pointed to our own countries. The third day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day, we were all aware of only one Earth."*

Another astronaut American Rusty Schweigert, who walked on the moon, had this to say,

"From the moon, earth is so small and so fragile and such a precious little spot in the universe that you can block it out with your thumb. Then you realize that on that spot, that beautiful warm blue and white circle, is everything that means anything to you ... all of nature and history, music, poetry and art, birth and love and death, tears, joy, prayer, dancing ... all of it right there in that little spot that you can cover with your thumb. And then you are changed forever. Your relationship to the world is no longer what it was."

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On this Earth Day, let us recall that if the end depends upon the beginning, how fortunate for us that “*God saw everything that he had made, and (pronounced it) very good.*” Genesis 1:31

We have a role and a responsibility to care for the earth and its creatures. Let’s not forget nor neglect that role.

May the Holy Spirit keep us attached to Jesus Christ, so that listening to the counsel of his words we hear them and believe them and live our lives as stewards of creation in the light of them.

To this end we sincerely pray: COME, HOLY SPIRIT, CREATOR BLEST, AND MAKE OUR HEARTS YOUR PLACE OF REST. Amen