

Homily 6th August 2016

1 Cor 15:1-11 + Luke 18: 9-14

Despite this being the digital age I am sure you will have some photo's albums at home where you have lovingly put in photos of you family and events of your life. They represent you whole life's story and that of your families. I think in this modern age we have lost that visual record as photos are stored in our computers often never looked at. Recently I went down to see my sons and my grandson on his first birthday. I took with me the boy's baby books – which recorded their first minutes of life right through to about 18 months. In it had their hospital bands, locks of hair, hand prints! And we can place ourselves in their lives too.

This is effectively what Paul is doing in Corinthians – painting a snapshot of what is happening – how the Christian movement had begun but it is only a snapshot of the picture – not the whole story. This snapshot tells of the resurrection and the future of all who believe in Jesus, He is trying to get the Corinthians to understand where they are and who they are in God's long story, And if they understand so many things which have troubled them m will be seen in the correct light,

So I suppose the questions for us this morning is: can we see ourselves in this amazing story – and do we live in the light of the good news of the resurrection?

In both readings this morning we see how 3 people have reacted to the story.

1. First there is Paul, We know something of his story – a zealot who persecuted Christians and put them to death. On the road to Damascus he encountered Jesus and his whole life changed. He became the apostle we see hear in this story. Acknowledging his past and recognising that it is only by God's grace that he is what he is now. He knows he is not living and operating in his own strength but by God's love who gives him the courage to live his life God's way now.

2. Let's now consider the Pharisee in the Luke story – a man high up in the echelons of Jewish life – one who was supposed to be an example of religious life. He stands in the Temple praying. 'I thank you thank I'm not one of those sinners – the adulterers or a thief. I give one tenth of all that I have to you! He wasn't praying to God – no he was praying with himself. He was just giving a testimony about how good he was before God and making sure all around him heard it!

3. Then there is the tax collector – in the society of the day he was the worst kind of person – one who was known to swindle people out of their money. He too is in the Temple but could not lift his eyes up to God. He knows he is a sinner and he beats his breast in repentance. His small faith sees through to the great heart of God.

You see true prayer comes from the heart not from what we do and are seen to do. It is between us and God alone. And we have to know who He is AND OUR PART IN THE STORY FOR US to be able to have a true relationship with Jesus – one that will impact our whole lives.

Hurricane warnings. Labour Day weekend, 1979 in Miami, Florida. While most of the nation played, the people of Miami watched. Hurricane David was coming their way, leaving a trail of flooded islands and homeless people in the Caribbean.

Floridians were preparing for David's coming. Windows were taped up, canned goods were bought, flashlights tested.

On the Miami River some single guys were trying to figure out the best way to protect their houseboat. None of them had ever lived on a houseboat before, much less weathered a hurricane.

They were coming to the end of their rope when suddenly a man named Phil showed up. He knew boats. He spoke the lingo and knew the knots. He said to those young men, "Tie her to land and you'll regret it. Those trees are going to get eaten by the hurricane. Your only hope is to anchor deep. Place four anchors in four different directions, leave the rope slack, and pray for the best."

YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO ANCHOR DEEP. Good advice for weathering hurricanes and good advice for weathering life's hurricanes.

Every now and then we humans get caught in a storm...a human storm of emotion, dread, anxiety, and fear. It could be our marriage, our mate, our career, our children, etc.

We all try to anchor in some form or another. But often we don't anchor in the right direction or deeply enough.

We need to anchor deep and in the right direction. It's our only hope. We must anchor ourselves to Christ. He is our only hope. Through His death and resurrection we anchor deeply.

There are three anchor points we need to think about:

- 1- My life is not futile
- 2- My failures are not fatal
- 3- My death is not final

We are part of the amazing story of God's love for the world and by God's grace we can live in the light of the Good news of the resurrection.