

Daily Homily

Friday, Fourth Week of Lent

27 March 2020

On the daily readings: ([usccb daily readings](#))

Yesterday was spent trying to figure out Holy Week and especially how best to celebrate the Sacred Paschal Triduum. The Vatican has issued directives regarding the celebration of Holy Week without an assembly – a first in the history of the Church. The Diocese has sent adaptations for the celebration relative to our own circumstances. A committee of parishioners is currently working on getting internet into the church and how to live stream our liturgies efficiently and effectively. We are making progress, and everyone involved is certain that everything will work out well.

Yesterday was also filled with conversation with several priests for different reasons. One of the many memos that the diocese sent to priests included a note to especially reach out and call older priests who live alone – so I called Fr. Terry! All of the conversations, however, included sharing ideas of what we are doing to communicate with parishioners. It was a productive day.

At the end of day, as I was fiddling with the computer – looking up music, watching various short videos from Fr. Michael Schmitz and Bishop Barron, I found a couple of sappy short movies and that led me to a treasure. A movie that I can remember watching when I was around ten years old. It was a movie that deeply impacted my young, impressionable mind and soul. The movie is entitled “Conspiracy of Hearts.” I didn’t need Netflix or Prime, the whole thing was right there on YouTube (I think!). It is set in World War II. It is about a group of cloistered nuns who, under the secrecy of darkness, courageously help Jewish children escape a neighboring concentration camp. This black and white film is a bit sentimental but at the age of ten it was formative (at the age of almost fifty – it still packed a punch). It taught me about what Catholics do in the face of tyranny. It showed me what a real religious vocation is about. It impressed on me that when the world is wrong outside the Church stands as a beacon of what is always true and right. The nuns risked life and limb, one was shot. They were brutally bullied. Time and again they were almost caught and time and again as the mother superior said, “We were kept safe.” In secrecy they saved children – and each other, they loved them, they cared for them as their own. They even respected the heritage the children observed by learning Jewish songs to sing the children to sleep. It was a treasure to find. It made me ten years old again, curled up next to mom and dad on the couch in our house in Columbia Station. I highly recommend this movie. A true treasure.

The Word of God in the book of Wisdom today is full of looming accusation, dark comments, insidious thoughts because “they knew not the hidden counsels of God.” In the gospel Jesus is moving about in secret because his adversaries are becoming more intense. There is a conspiracy against his heart – his heart is human and divine. His heart is the heart of man and the heart of God. Regardless, they don’t want to acknowledge or recognize that. They are plotting against him. Today we even hear the shocking news that they want to kill him. That’s extreme and truly dark. The forces that be are rising up against him.

So like a group of nuns in a war torn world, Jesus stands in the face of tyranny with his vocation of purpose, with his courageous words, with his light of what is true and right. He risks life and limb, being caught and being saved. While there is a conspiracy of darkness and evil against Jesus’ heart, here’s the turn and the twist. Jesus has his own conspiracy going. His heart is conspiring with love – love for all, love for you, and love for me. In what we face now, Jesus is working for our good. Under the guise of night, in deep-down hidden things, in secret ways even Jesus is working for our good. He is conspiring to win us over, conspiring for us to give him our heart and our all.