2A

MDP of God

There’s a story about the great scientist Albert Einstein

The story goes that this beautiful—drop dead gorgeous woman one time approached the great scientist and said to him, “Mr Einstein—you and I should have kids together---with my looks and your brains—*our children could rule the world”*

But Albert Einstein said to the woman—“ Madam---*have you considered the possibility that our children could* **have my looks and your brains**?”

Now it’s nice to have goals for your kids—*and this woman obviously had some pretty lofty goals for her kids*

In the mind of this woman it was all so easy—she never considered the other possibilities that could arise from her plan—*her very faulty plan*

I share that story with you, because I think it shows how often things seem to us pretty simple---and we often don’t consider how complicated things can be

For instance – we walk into a room and turn a switch and lights come on—it’s all so simple. Most of us have no idea what it takes to build a power plant—what it takes to convert oil or gas or coal into electricity—what it takes to build transmission lines—why they need transformers on electric lines—*I personally have no idea what a transformer is*---but I know they’re on telephone poles and for some reason are needed to get electricity to your house or store or place of work

All most of us know is we turn a switch and the lights come on

We don’t know how to build a light bulb—we don’t know why you need a ballast—I don’t even know what a ballast is—*all I know is we have some that just start beeping once in a while for no apparent reason*

The same is true with our GPS on our phone—we type in an address—and we get step by step directions on how to get somewhere

We don’t know what it takes to build a smart phone—or what it takes to put up a cell tower---or what it takes to put a satellite into orbit that the GPS connects too (if they still even still work that way—I’m not sure about that)

*I bring all that up* because we tend to think things are much more simple that they are—**that’s true of our salvation as well**

A lot of people think,—“all I have to do is believe in Jesus and I’m saved”—there’s no sense that they have to obey His teaching—or that they need to receive the sacraments--- or that they might be called on by Jesus to embrace the cross—or that they need to die to themselves for other or for the Lord

It’s like that beautiful woman and Albert Einstein—“we ought to have kids—with my looks and your brains they’ll rule the world” [It’s more complicated than that]

Our gospel today gives us some insight *into how God’s grace comes into our lives*

All true Christians recognize that we can’t save ourselves –that we are saved by God’s grace

But *the bible tells us that God’s grace comes into our lives through the ministry of others*

St Paul presumes that in our 2nd reading today when he speaks of being an apostle—in other passages he says that as an Apostle he impacts the lives of others by his ministry

We even see that with Jesus in today’s gospel

We call Jesus—“**The Christ**”—Christ means “the anointed one”

When was Jesus anointed? We heard it in today’s gospel—*He was anointed by the Holy Spirit on the day of His baptism*

**He was anointed the Christ through the ministry of John the Baptist**

Think of that folks—a lot of times you’ll hear people say, “Why do I have to confess my sins to a priest? I can go right to God!

Why do I have to come to Church? I can pray on my own! I don’t have to come with those people---to pray---those people are nothing but a bunch of hypocrites*-- I want nothing to do with them*

“I’ll just go to God on my own”—Now folks—if anyone could have said, “Why do I need to go to this guy to receive my anointing—if anyone could just go to the Father and say “Anoint me.”—If anyone could have called the Holy Spirit and said- “Come on me and anoint me”—**it was Jesus**—*But He didn’t do it that way*—**He chose to go to a mere man to receive His anointing**

Why? Because Jesus wanted to show us that we need others if we are to receive His saving grace—and we see that throughout the New Testament

After all Jesus tells us that unless we’re born again of water and the Spirit –we have no life---He was speaking about Baptism---*and none of us can baptize ourselves*

We’re baptized by the ministry of the Church—the baptismal font is the womb of Holy Mother the Church—and it’s through the ministry of the Church that we’re born into the Family of God

Most of us can’t provide the Eucharist for ourselves—and it’s of the Eucharist that Jesus says, “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you”

But if we don’t come to Church –if we don’t participate in Mass ---we’re not going to receive that grace Jesus says **we need** for salvation

None of us have the power to forgive our own sins---again, it’s through the ministry of the Church that we receive God’s grace

As I priest---*I can’t forgive myself*—**I need to confess to another priest in order to receive God’s saving grace**

Why? Why did God make it this way? Why did Jesus choose to become the Christ—choose to become the anointed one—through the ministry of John the Baptist?

**It all comes from who God is**

God is a community of love—God made us so that we are meant to be born into a community of love that we call the family—because the family is meant to model God –*the family is meant to point us to God*

*That’s why in our salvation* we’re meant to be born again into the family of God—the Church

*He doesn’t want us to just be rugged individualist*---**He wants us to love one another**—He wants us to support one another—He wants us to build up one another---*because that’s how we model Him in the world*

God is a community of love

St Paul in First Corinthians 12 –speaks of how we are the Body of Christ—and we all have our gifts—*but God gives those gifts so we can build up the Body* [not just to enrich ourselves—not for our personal glory—but to build up His Body]

And then in the next chapter we hear that beautiful passage about love that is so often read at weddings---that love is patient—love is kind—love is not self-serving

So in chapter 12 he tells us we are the Body of Christ and that we need to use our gifts to build up the Body---and in the next chapter he tells us that we need to love each other

*That community of love that we call the Church is at the heart of God’s plan*

So God made it so that we need one another if we are to receive His saving grace

*It’s good that we pray privately*—**but that’s not enough**

*It’s good that we believe in Jesus*—**but that’s not enough**

*It’s good that we try not to hurt others*—**but that’s not enough**

Jesus chose to become the Christ through the ministry of a mere man---*because He wanted to teach us that we need one another*

Jesus formed a community of disciples around Himself because He wanted us to know *that we need the community of faith*

Jesus made it so that we receive His saving grace through the sacraments because He wanted us to know that we need others if we are to be pleasing in the sight of God—**we can’t be pleasing to Him on our own**

My friends—the bottom line of our salvation is that heaven is God’s family home---*if it’s to be our home* **we need to be part of the family**

It is a little like turning on a light

You walk into a room and turn the switch

But if the switch is connected to wires—if the wires aren’t connected to a light bulb—if the house isn’t connected to the power grid—if the power grid isn’t connected to a power plant---**then the light’s not going to come on**

Our salvation is also pretty simple—Jesus on the cross won for us the grace of salvation

But if we aren’t connected to His Body—if we’re not humble enough to recognize our need for the Church – if we’re not open to the ministry of others—if we refuse to use our gifts to build up the Body—if we refuse to obey His Wisdom---*then the grace of salvation won’t come into our lives* [He wants it too—God desires to give us His saving grace—but if we refuse to be part of the Body—we are cut off from the source of that saving grace]

Jesus –the all-powerful God--*went to a mere man to become the Christ*

Let’s like Him be humble enough to recognize our need for others—let’s be willing to use our gifts to build up His Body—Let’s humbly receive the saving grace Jesus so freely gives us in the sacraments of His Church

Let’s love one another—and build one another up –*so that we can better model God* **and be pleasing in His sight**