

Fr. Gary's Homily Notes
Third Sunday of Easter | April 14, 2024

Catherine O'Brien. I met her toward the end of her life. She grew up in Buffalo Township, just north of Pardeeville. She never married; taught school mostly in the Milwaukee area all her life. She lived simply, frugally, and invested wisely. When she died just over four years ago at the age of 97, she left her entire estate of \$10 Million to the church.

Unless the multiplication of loaves and fishes takes place in my bank accounts, I'm quite certain I won't be leaving behind such an estate. Few of us will. (If you are able to do so, I'd like to see you right after Mass!!) But we do ask ourselves: what will we be leaving behind in the end? What will my life have witnessed? For what will we be remembered?

The early disciples didn't leave behind estates, at least none that we know of, but they did leave behind a treasure. They left behind a path of faith, a path that was rooted in their ancestors, but fulfilled in Jesus Christ. They left behind a way of life that the world had never seen, a new moral code that was not based on laws but on the command of love. They left behind a gospel, not only written in words, but lived to witness the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior. But the disciples are long gone. Now it's up to us. What will we leave behind? What do we give witness to?

Another way to ask it: If others were to follow our path of life, where will it lead them? If they used us for a guide through the maze of life with all its blessings and challenges, where would they end up? Would they find their way to Jesus Christ? If future generations used our calendars, our checkbooks, our priorities, our Google searches as a path to follow, would they be led to Christ?

What is the moral code we are imprinting upon this earth for the generations to come? Will they see a code based on kindness and forgiveness and compassion? Will love be the anchor of that moral code, or will some other anchor be evident, anchors of revenge and closed doors? What are the truths that we live by, that we give witness to in our personal lives, in the communities we create, in the particular roles in life?

The Risen Jesus appeared to the Eleven as "flesh and bone." There was no doubt: he was real. Does the world see us – in flesh and bone- as witnessing the compassion and justice and reconciliation that we have been called to in Jesus Christ? Will the simplicity of our everyday lives give direction to others as they navigate the complexities of our culture, in the struggles and hopes and dreams for ourselves and our families?

We may well not be leaving behind a \$10M estate, but whether we admit it or not, each and every one of us – we are leaving something behind.