

Michael Lingaur

Homily: First Mass as Deacon, Sunday June 21, 2020

Lectionary: Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A - Lectionary: 94

Once there was small farming community that lived in a beautiful country valley next to a gentle flowing river. This little community was deeply Catholic and lived in peace and harmony among their neighboring farming villages. The sunny weather, the music of the gently flowing river, and the clear starry nights inspired this people to describe their little home as God's country.

One year, the happiness of this little community was disrupted by a bad harvest. With very little money and no other skills beside farming to fall back on, this little community decided to place all their trust in God and leave their beautiful little home. They moved to a distant far-off country, which promised a better harvest and a return to the peaceful living they so desired.

After their difficult and perilous journey, this little Catholic community found a beautiful new home. They built a new church and started a new school, and after a few goods harvests, their peace and happiness returned.

Some years passed and another crisis arose. Their new country was attacked by a foreign enemy and went to war. This war threatened their newfound happiness and peace. With little power to control the outcome of the war, this little Catholic community decided again to pray and place all their trust in the Lord. A few years passed, victory came, and the war ended. This little Catholic community returned to their peaceful and happy lives.

Some years passed and another crisis arose. Their new country was struck by a horrible disease. This disease threatened their newfound happiness and peace. With little power to control the disease, this little Catholic community closed their homes off to the world, came together, and decided to pray and place all their trust in the Lord. A few months passed and the disease subsided, and the little Catholic community returned to their peaceful happy life.

Some years passed and another crisis arose. An economic crisis. The community gathered, gave what they could give to those who were in need, and decided to pray and place all their trust in the Lord. The Great Depression passed, and this little Catholic community returned to their peaceful happy lives.

Some years passed and another crisis arose. World War II broke out in their old country in Europe. With little power to control the outcome, this little Catholic community came together, prayed, and placed all their trust in the Lord. The United States once again won victory and this little Catholic community returned to their life of peace and happiness supporting Catholic faith and education on the Leelanau Peninsula.

For you see, this little Catholic community is our community, the parish of Lake Leelanau St. Mary's. This story is not a fairy tale, but the real story of our parish history, the history of how we came to be in this moment.

Jesus says: "Fear no one. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in Hell."

In the summer of 1864, before our parish was founded, Mrs. Jacob Schaub traveled by boat to Buffalo, New York in order to sell a homemade barrel of maple syrup. She wanted to use the money to buy furnishing for our new Church. These furnishing included a little statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On her voyage home, a storm rose up and threatened her boat. With nothing else to do, she gathered her fellow passengers around the little statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they all prayed together for their survival.

Mrs. Jacob Schaub trusted in the Lord's protection. The storm calmed and she made it home safely. She told this story to the Venerable Bishop Baraga who, that fall, founded this parish, and

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decided to name it after the Blessed Virgin Mary as a thank you for saving Mrs. Jacob Schaub. We still have this statue. It sits just above our confessional.

In 1920s the old school gym was built by a collection of stones from farm across the parish.

In 1940, when we needed to renovate the Church, some parishioners, like Joe Miller, came and provided the labor themselves. They literally dug out the full basement below the Church that we use today.

These stories are all available in the Diocesan Archives and, if you ever get the chance, I encourage you to read them. They reveal that a strength of this parish has always been our pious devotion to trusting in the Lord.

The Spanish flu threatened us. Two World Wars threatened us. The great depression threatened us. Now, it is our generations turn. As the Corona virus threatens to harm this parish community and school, we too must come together, we too must pray, and we too must trust in the Lord, just as our parents did during their own times of crisis.

Today is a great day of celebration for this parish. This weekend, you have offered another one of your sons for a lifetime of service to the Lord and his Church. Let us not dwell in fear of what may happen. Instead, let us again place all our trust in the Lord who has proven himself so worthy of our unconditional trust in our past.