

“The Road To Life”

John 17:11b-19

Christ is Risen!! He is Risen indeed!! Alleluia!!

In recent days, I have been reminded of an old proverb which says, “A road is a place on which you journey, it is not a destination.” As the school year is winding down and many significant changes and moves are happening all around us – the graduating seniors, the 75th anniversary of Our Redeemer, the new roof, the work on the windows (among others), the changes and milestones in your own families – we are all, but especially our graduates, we are all bombarded with “Road of life” metaphors.

I am not a big fan of “Road of life” metaphors. “A road is a place on which you journey, it is not a destination.” This journey we are on is the “Road to life”, not “of life”.

Those graduating in the coming days will be congratulated numerous times for having really accomplished something. But the truth is, the changes, accomplishments, and milestones in our lives are just part of the road.

Now, this does not mean that we should not enjoy and appreciate the journey. One of my favorite sayings is “enjoy the journey.” I believe my family grows tired of hearing me say that. And as children of God, there is much to enjoy. We began our journey at the font. God placed each of us on the path of His choosing. And His Word has been a lamp to our feet and a light to our path ever since.

But the path (the road) is not the destination. There is a goal. There is an end. There is a fulfillment of God’s plan. The road (and the end of the road) are all God’s choosing. The changes, accomplishments, and milestones are all a part of God’s will and plan to get us to the destination. He has done all the work and made all the arrangements.

It’s like what we see with Matthias who was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the 12. He is remembered and honored by the church as an apostle of Jesus. What is it that Matthias did to deserve this honor and position? He didn’t do anything. He was one of the believers who Christ called early in His ministry. He was there from the baptism of John until Christ’s Ascension into heaven.

We can certainly make the argument that Matthias did do something in that he remained faithful while others fell away – namely

Judas. Remaining in faith is certainly an important “something.” But we hear how this was accomplished in our Gospel reading. As Christ prays, He says, “While I was with them, I kept them in Your Name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

The disciple’s faithfulness, Matthias’ faithfulness, your faithfulness, my faithfulness is the result of God’s work and God’s protection. In Baptism, we were given God’s Name, and we have been kept in that Name. Within the protection of His Church, Christ has guarded us. We have now become the witnesses of the resurrection – bearing witness to this world that Christ is Risen!! He is Risen indeed!!

As we travel down our “Road to Life”, sharing that journey with our brothers and sisters in Christ is a lot like being on an extended family vacation. We have a destination which is the goal, but there is an “are we there yet?” journey to take place.

The cliched comparisons are endless. On a journey, brothers and sisters are both a source of joy and entertainment, and a source of frustration. “She’s touching me; She’s looking at me.” Grace and sin abound on our journey. And just like dealing with the annoying looks

from our siblings in the backseat of the car, we are called to be gracious, not easily angered, patient forgiving. Our Father is guiding us along the appointed path ensuring that we will reach our destination in the time of His choosing.

On this journey, the world will hate you, because the world hated Christ first. The “Road to Life” is not an easy journey. It is the narrow path. The good thing with our Father in heaven is that we know He will never “turn this car around if you kids don’t shape up.” He is patient, slow to anger, forgiving, and abounding in steadfast love. Yet, He does discipline us. His children do not get to do whatever they want whenever they want. No one would want to be on a journey where the kids make all the decisions and set all the guidelines.

As we continue on our “Road to Life”, remember to enjoy the journey, but also remember that the “road is a place on which you journey, it is not a destination.” There is a greater destination in God’s plan. It is the empty tomb. The empty tomb is the truth Christ came to proclaim. The resurrection of Jesus is the truth we proclaim. The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting is the goal of us all. Amen.

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