

HOMILY 19TH SUN OT YRC 2019

Psychologists have been writing recently about the importance of acceptance in our lives. When something happens in our lives that we see as negative, acceptance plays an important role in tolerating the negative thoughts and feelings and moving forward in our lives in a productive and meaningful way. Acceptance has gotten a bad name. When we think of acceptance we tend to think that this involves a passive accepting of things as they are and giving up and resigning yourself to a life that is unsatisfying and unfulfilling. That is not what psychologists are referring to as acceptance. Acceptance is accepting what is, especially if you do not like it, and then working as best you can in the circumstances that you find yourself in and the resources at your disposal to mitigate the situation, heal and change what can be changed so that you can go on with your life in a meaningful way. If we cannot accept what is, we ruminate, we dwell on what should be and get stuck on things that we cannot change which will prevent us from moving forward in our lives. Until we accept what is, we will never be able to move forward. As Catholics, our faith gives us what we need to accept what is and move forward in our lives.

In the second reading we hear: “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” Faith is not just a belief that God exists. Faith is the belief that God loves us unconditionally, is always caring for us, he will help us, and we will be able to move forward in our lives in a meaningful way. We may not see how our situation will work out, we may not know exactly what we are going to do, but we can be comfortable not knowing because we know God, the one who will help us. St. Paul gives us Abraham as an example of a man of great faith. Look what he accepted. Abraham was elderly when God told him to uproot his family, move away from his relatives and homeland, and move to a foreign place, not knowing where that would be. God would lead him and let him know when he got there. I would not have been too happy about that and I could have come up with a multitude of reasons not to accept it, but Abraham had great faith and was comfortable not knowing because he knew that God knew and he could trust God to bring him to a good place.

Life can be hard at times, but if we can accept what is with faith, we can move forward in our lives. In the first half of life we spend much of our time and energy figuring out who we are and what we are good at and what we are called to do in our lives. Sometimes in the process of doing this we try something and we fail. That can be hard to accept. Sometimes instead of accepting it, we blame someone else or beat ourselves up for the failure. We can get caught up in if only things would have been different. We cannot change the past. Or we can refuse to accept the failure and keep working on something we will never succeed at. It is way healthier to accept that I am not good at that and it is not what God is calling me to do. But God does have a plan for my life and he will help me to discover it. I am not sure what that is right now, but I have to look at the things that are available to me and try something else. Sometimes we lose important relationships in our lives. Marriages end in divorce, people die. Sometimes we do not want to accept the pain that goes along with that. We pretend that it does not matter. We stay busy so we do not think about it. If we do not accept that it is painful, we will never heal. We need to feel the pain and grieve the loss. We need to tell our story over and over again until we do not need to tell it any more. We need to reach out to the people in our lives that can help us. That is what Divorce care is all about, acknowledging the pain and healing. We have sessions starting again next month. If you are divorced consider joining us, if you know someone who is divorced, invite them. You may not know now how you are going to go on living without this person, but be comfortable with not knowing because God will help you. As we age we become aware of the fact that we can no longer do what we did when we were young. And if we live long enough we will get to the point where we can no longer live independently. If I cannot accept that I can no longer walk safely without a walker, I can walk without it and fall and break a hip, or I can stay home all of the time so no one sees me with the walker. Or I can accept the walker and figure out what life will be with a walker. God will help us. Faith is not just believing that God exists, it is trusting that God loves us unconditionally, God is always with us, God is always caring for us, and even when I do not know how, things are going to work out. Accept what is and God will help us to continue to live.