

Homily by Fr. Ken Laverone, OFM
50th Anniversary of Resurrection Parish, Aptos
September 9, 2018 – Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

At about the age of 59, a man with a twinkle in his eye and a mischievous grin moved a few miles down the road to bring together a new faith community and a building that would be this communities' home. Can you imagine starting a family at 59 years of age? It took a lot of spunk and imagination for Fr. Francis Markey to bring life into a new Christian community in 1968, less than three years after the end of the Second Vatican Council.

Fr. Markey was excited about all that was happening with the renewal in the Church. He was intent upon bringing this new family to life. He would feed, nurture, challenge, and encourage this family to grow up into a mature, well-informed, courageous, risky community basing who they were on Jesus. They would demonstrate this by their sharing in a liturgical and preaching tradition that would have an impact in this community and within the Diocese of Monterey to this day. Fr. Markey brought renewal and a new sense of self understanding to this parish before many USA bishops brought renewal to the Church.

Fr. Markey and this parish in the years between 1968-1974 was a place of mentoring for many seminarians and deacons. These included Fr. Mike Miller, Fr. Larry Betrozoff, and myself as a college seminarian. We were formed and molded in the image and likeness of Francis Markey as a leader and shepherd. Interesting, three of us came back to serve this family empowered to proclaim the word and to break the bread of life and share the cup of salvation, to celebrate intimate encounters with God through the Sacraments of the Church.

Fifty years I suppose is just a little over middle age today. But to arrive at 50 years there are difficulties and challenges as well as great times of celebration of faith as the family of God. As people of the Resurrection, we know that there will be suffering and death but always new life.

This vibrant group of people has grown and diminished and grown again over the years. There were the days of the black arm bands and rocks in the collection basket as well as days to joyously dedicate a new home. There has been a change of emphasis in ministries, some have died a happy death and new ministries and outreach to the needy and youth have flourished.

The Sunday gathering of the family for its weekly meal, of hearing and telling and retelling the stories of the faith of our ancestors and our experience of God walking with us, feeding us, remains the keystone of who we are as the Resurrection Eucharistic family.

This parish for over 50 years, beginning with Fr. Markey and continuing today with Fr. Romeo and Deacon Patrick and the current parish staff continues to call the family to holiness by being open to HEAR the word of God. Fr. Markey was known for his well-prepared homilies, as were several of his successors, but he began the mission of challenging the family to listen deeply to what Jesus is calling us to be as Church.

The gospel today challenges us to continue to be open to the WORD OF GOD. Sometimes we need our ears cleared so as to hear with the ears of our hearts, but other times we need the finger to be put into our ears to block out the noise of the outside world in order to find the solitude and calm to discover the spiritual center of our hearts where we find the grace of God waiting to be enfleshed in our lives as family and as individuals as part of the Church. Only when we are able to hear with our hearts are we able to genuinely incarnate that Word into our lives.

We celebrate today that God has called this Resurrection People of God 50 years ago. We have heard and continue to hear the good news of the prophet Isaiah that our God is here. That God is here without vindication. That God comes here to save us from darkness and death. God opens our eyes and clears our ears, we are healed of our brokenness, and thus we leap with joy, and our tongues sing with joy.

May the upcoming years of this parish continue to be a stream of refreshing water that flows into the deserts of people's lives, may this family be known as a place where others can join this family to get away from the burning sands of the heat of the day and be able to find pools of cool water to provide thirsty hearts springs of waters of life.

May the Lord Give You Peace!