



**Blessed Sacrament Parish**  
**Homily by Father Mike Kuse**  
**November 24, 2018 Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Reading I Deuteronomy 7:13-14**

**Psalm 93:1-5**

**Reading II Revelations 1:5-8**

**Gospel John 18:33-37**

**Homily**

I just asked the kids a minute ago: "Do you like to be surprised?" So I am now asking you, "Do you like to be surprised?" Some may, and others will say, "It depends on the surprise." Jesus says, "When I surprise you, you are going to have no idea from day to day because I am the only one who knows what you really need. You may be asking for one thing, but I give you something else. And you may be angry with me, and that's all right. I can handle all your anger because I know when I do something for you that it is going to change your life and you are going to be a better person." And he said, "If you're going to follow me, I want you to surprise each other."

You had no idea when you came to church this morning who would show up. And they had no idea you were going to show up. But we're here, and we're here for surprises. We're here because God is saying, "When you leave church today, I promise you that during this week you are going to notice some neat things that either you are going to do for someone else, or they're going to do for you. But when it happens, you are going to know that is what my Kingdom is all about."

A couple of little experiences of that: If you watch television, there is a television commercial that comes on for St. Jude Hospital, and if you have seen that you have seen how all the children have different needs. Their latest commercial shows a young boy in a wheelchair and is handicapped. And he goes around smiling at everybody else. He sees this young boy sitting in the corner who is very sad because no one is paying any attention to him. The young boy in the wheelchair goes over to him and asks, "May I be your friend?" He looks at him with this fantastic smile and says, "Get in with the rest of us. This place is a lot of fun. You get better as you go along. We don't want anybody to be left out. We want everybody to be a part of this place."

The young boy in the wheelchair who said, "May I be your friend," was taking a chance. And when the other boy said, "Yes," they were both taking a chance. And Jesus says, "If you want to get to Heaven, you certainly have to be ready for taking chances. And some you are going to like, and others you are not going to like. But always be ready for that surprise because that's what my Kingdom is all about." If I were to ask all of you to stand

up and tell us all the neat things that have happened this year in your life, that could be interesting—or tell us how you may have made a difference in someone else’s life.

The story that I have told before but comes back because it fits into the Scripture, is the story of two young men who were walking from New Jersey to Mexico, and they were going to work among the poor down there. But to do that they decided that they were going to walk and run from New Jersey all the way to New Mexico. One guy drove a van, and the other two walked and they kept rotating. Along the way they would look for a place to stay for the night, and they would trust people, wherever it was.

They called the rectory and said, “Father, this is who we are and this is what we are doing, and can you get us a place to stay for the night? Also, could you get your parishioners to come to a gathering tonight at 7 o’clock so we can tell them what we are doing. I said, “Well, I am not sure how many people I can get on this short a notice, but I will try.” Anyway we had about 40 people show up. In the group was a couple who had two children and I asked them, before the gathering, if they would give lodging to these fellows for the night.

They said, “Sure.” They didn’t know what they were getting into, and these boys were putting their trust in people in every city they went. So after the evening session we went out to the house, and I went with them. The couple that welcomed them, lived in a huge house—I called it an estate. This was over by Champaign/Urbana and the house was located on Maine Street. The house had been on the market for a long time, so they bought it at a very reasonable price and the purpose in buying it was that they planned to turn it into a place for people to come and pray and relax and enjoy the gardens around the house. There were rooms above the garage for servants in the past, and they fixed them up for lodgers. All you had to do was call and say, “I am in the area. Can I come for a day, or two, or a month?” And they welcomed you.

Well, that night we pulled up in front of the house and the fellows said to me, “Oh, this is a big place.” Well they were in for the surprise of their life. We went into the house and the husband and wife said, “Please, sit down here and we will be back in a few minutes.” And so we were chatting and all of a sudden the wife comes out and is carrying a basin, and water and a cloth over her arm. She kneeled in front of these three men and said, “May I wash your feet?” They were speechless, and then said, “Well, I guess so.” Then with reverence she took the gym shoes off that they were wearing and then took the old socks off of their feet, washed their feet and dried their feet. Because the socks were bloodstained and soiled from all the walking, she said to them, “I have a new pair of socks for you.” And she put them on their feet. When she was all done she said, “Thank you for letting me wash your feet. Now just enjoy yourselves. Supper will be ready in a short time.”

They spent the night. The next morning she fed them breakfast, they got into their van, went out to the Interstate and restarted their journey. Those young men were so surprised by the action of the woman washing their feet. When they got to their next

destination they were asked, "How are things going?" And they answered, "What happened to us at the last stop was beyond anything we could have ever imagined." They told this story, and someone called a Chicago station and the next thing that happened it was all over the news media and in the Chicago papers. Newspapers from all over reported about this experience of the woman washing their feet. The lady was so embarrassed. She said, "I was just doing what I thought I should do. And now they are making a spectacle out of it when I've done something so awesome."

When is the last time someone washed your feet? I don't mean literally washed your feet like she did, but when did someone help you with something and it was so unexpected? When did someone come up to you like the little boy in the wheelchair and say, "Can I be your friend?" When have you done that? When have you washed someone else's feet? When did you ask someone, "Can I be your friend?"

How does that feel? And that is really why we have come here this morning. Every Sunday we come here to pray and that's what it is all about. We know some people, and there are other we do not know but we come in and ask, "How are you?" What you are really saying is, "I really want to wash your feet. I don't know what your needs are, I just want to pray for you." Imagine if we all were doing that how we could transform the world in which we live. You can't pick and choose. That's not a surprise. Surprise is when someone gives of himself and asks to be received.

So as we end this year of grace, and we begin the season of Advent, let's ask ourselves: What has happened to us spiritually since last November? What are the surprises that have taken place either by giving or receiving? And are we ready to enter into a new year realizing that there is a God, and this God is totally full of surprises.

When Grayson was born, he was a surprise to the whole world. There is no other Grayson. He is going to spend his whole life surprising people. And in order for him to do that, other people are going to surprise him. And it is in the give and take that we become God's people. So may you and I think of that in our own lives. God will always help you with any situation you have in your life. And he says to all of us, "Whenever you think that you are in control, what you are saying is, 'I can take care of myself, I don't need your help.'" And Jesus says, "Go for it. Get the gold. Get everything you want. It's not going to make you happy. But the human contact, that is what changes who we are."

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