

**5th Sunday of Easter “B”
2018**

In my family 4 boys were born first before Mom and Dad had any girls. And when we were growing up that meant that we had to learn stuff from my Dad and stuff from my Mom. All of us boys took turns learning to iron – first on handkerchiefs then onto Dad’s shirts. We had to learn to cook and clean up a kitchen. Mom taught us how to use the washer and the dryer. She always said that she was going to send us out into the world better equipped than Dad was.

Now we didn’t always take to these tasks with great enthusiasm. But trust me all my brothers learned how to take of themselves. Dad also taught us to mow the grass – pull the weeds – shovel the snow and the worst lesson – how to change a tire. Dad showed us – then stepped back and we had to do it on our own.

It took me a good 3 hours the first time that I had to change a tire. Dad and my brothers over my shoulder the whole time. It was hot – I was tired – and I prayed long and hard that this would never happen to me while I was driving.

Now the 4 girls that were born after us were taught the same lessons by my Mom. They had to take their turn with iron and the kitchen and the laundry basket. And Dad taught them how to mow the grass how to use a shovel and rake. But what we were waiting for was their 3 hours out in the sun when they turned 16. The time of reckoning when they had to learn to change a tire.

Lisa is the oldest girl and we had been warning her for a whole year about it. We told her she wasn’t strong enough – that she would never be able to do it. We were prepared for an afternoon of tears and we gathered around the front porch when Dad took her outside. He showed her where everything was and then handed her a AAA card with a phone number to use if the car ever got a flat. We still moan about that to

this day at times when we’re together. It just didn’t seem fair to us.

We were the branches of this Mulvany tree that Mom and Dad had started. And each of us were called to do our part to make sure that our little tree was well watered – offered good shade and was part of the larger forest to which we belonged. It was not our concern how my folks pruned each of us to be ready to bear fruit. Our concern was to offer only what we have.

Too often during the time of Christ and even today – we can get caught up worrying about what God has given me versus what God has given to someone else. That’ll always lead us to a lonely place away from gratitude. If we take to heart the words of Jesus and realize that we all have fruit to bear – that we all have gifts to give – that will have us working from a heart of gratitude. A gratefulness to God for everything that we have.

There are so many gifts in this community. And we’ve been so blessed to stand on the gifts given by those who have gone before us. I cannot imagine what it was like for those first Christian disciples that spent their whole lives gathering a community together – telling stories of Jesus and breaking bread. Nor can I imagine the generations of people who built cathedrals in every corner of the world – and painted, carved or put stories of Christ into stained glass.

And I stand in awe of the elders of this community of Corpus – who have here and all over this country carried the gift of faith in their words – their work and their example. They make me want to do the same.

So – don’t worry about what gift you have been given – but pray daily that you will have the strength to give it away like those who walked this road before us.