

April 3, 2016 Batman v. Superman Homily:

Brothers and sisters, currently the most popular movie in America features two comic book legends, Batman and Superman. In common everyday parlance, they are known as Superheroes. What distinguishes superheroes from the rest of us is their extraordinary powers. Just consider the following traits found in many of them... strength, agility, speed and, in Superman's case, the gift of taking flight.

Fr. Gerald O' Collins notes in his book "Believing in the Resurrection" the ordinariness of Our Lord's appearances following His Resurrection from the dead. There are no flashes of lightning, no trumpet blast, no peals of thunder, no chorus of angels and certainly no demonstration of power. Even the verbs that we translate "rise" refer in Greek to ordinary actions... getting up, awakening, and standing up. Let us also remind ourselves that Our Blessed Lord, the King of Kings came into this world in a most unassuming way. He was born in a stable and not in a place of luxury, a palace.

Our Risen Lord simply offers the frightened disciples the most ordinary words of greeting. "Peace be with you", he states, not once but three times. It's as if he said to them, "hello" or "Good day". And on this Mercy Sunday, we are also surprised that he had no desire to avenge himself on those who deserted Him on Good Friday. He sends them out to be his ambassadors of reconciliation and mercy. In view of the incredible powers of superheroes, it is all the more amazing that the only action worth noting is when he breathed on the disciples, a clear reference to the creation of man recorded in the Book of Genesis. The eternal One breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life (Gen.2:7).

In our technological culture, we are accustomed to learning about extraordinary developments in the field of science. The argument advanced by many skeptics is that science renders religious faith obsolete. Science trumps religion! Religious people are ignorant and superstitious. The filmmaker Woody Allen, an unbelieving man, addresses religious themes in many of his films. In a scene from one of his movies, the character he plays, a skeptic, says he will not believe in God unless he sees something inexplicable and amazing. When asked what he would consider truly amazing, he replied, "Seeing my cousin Sacha pick up the check at the local restaurant. Now that would be amazing!"

Perhaps one lesson we can learn from today's gospel reading (Jn.20:19-30) is that some of the most extraordinary grace-filled moments in life are very often the simplest. Even a simple, unexpected greeting from a holy person can be enough to revitalize our faith and draw us closer to the Lord. Only recently, people waited in line for hours in order to touch the hand of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia.

The presence of the wounds of the Risen Jesus' body was enough to convince Thomas to put his faith in Jesus. Nothing spectacular! It was a remarkably simple invitation to faith in Him.

Amen!