

Homily052216

### **RE-CALCULATING!**

(Msgr. McHenry was not scheduled to preach this past Sunday, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. The following is a reprise of a homily he preached a couple of years ago)

Recently I saw a small cartoon of a car driving off a cliff and the tagline underneath said: “Recalculating!” Clever and funny, I thought. And right on target. It reminded me of how far we have come in some ways. Used to be that you didn’t embark on a trip without a glove compartment filled with maps. I remember people bragging about how good their particular set of maps was. Now we have one page maps that we print out from Google Maps. We type in our present location and our destination and hit the Map It! Command and voila! (Right or wrong) there is the map taking us to our destination. The alternative is to enter our coordinates into our car’s or cell phone’s GPS system and then follow the same results. It is in the context of the Car GPS system that the recalculating comment becomes germane.

Direction in life is a big thing. Getting to where we want to go is very important. Knowing how to get where we want to go is a big thing. Getting from here to there or from here to heaven can be the very biggest of things. I have found that in order to be successful we have to do a good amount of ‘recalculating’ if we are to be successful. And just as we have to do our share of recalculating, so does the Lord have to do some on his side depending on what all we are doing or have done. In the gospel today Our Lord speaks about his Father’s house. There is room. Plenty of room. Plenty of room for us—for you and me. There is not only room for all of us but God desires all of us and wants all of us to be with Him.

In 2003, my sister, my brothers and I moved our mother into the Rectory here where she lived for the next five years. We prepared a place for her. We did for her what the Lord said he will do for us—prepare a place. We are not divine, just ordinary children but children who had a love for their mother and wanted her to be safe and cared for at the end of her life. We set up her new rooms to resemble, as closely as possible, the rooms she was moving out of, in order to help her transition to be as seamless as possible. Long before that moment I had had a conversation with my mom. She was living in a retirement community over in Fox Chase. She was in independent living and she liked it. Each day she would visit her friends in assisted living. She thought that there weren’t enough nurses and staff to take care of the people who lived there. She said a number of times she would not like to go there. It was then that I told her I would move her into the Rectory if it ever came to that point where she needed assisted living. When I asked her if she would be okay she thought for a few moments and then said: “Yes. I would like

that. That would be very good.” And so when that time came there was no resistance on her part. And my mother was very capable of resisting when she thought the situation warranted it.

There’s a place for us. That is the good news. But there is a corollary. No one will be forced to go there. You have to want to go there. But there is another corollary. Just wanting to go there is not enough either. The Father’s House is a wonderful place. There is a Way that everyone lives in the House of the Father. In order to enter we must live that way too. We are not allowed to enter the Father’s House carrying a lot of extraneous baggage. There are certain things that do not belong there and we are not allowed to carry with us as we cross the threshold.

We will have to downsize. Certain things will have to go. What things? Well, we like to gossip and trade on the juicy tidbits we learn about the foibles of other people. But there is no gossip in the Father’s House. We will have to let the gossip go. We either do that here or we do that right on the threshold but we cannot take it with us into the kingdom. Our anger that we love so much and feel entitled to? Say goodbye. The judgments we make so rashly—Tata! The lusts—adios. The prejudices—outtahere! The unforgiveness? Kiss it goodbye. There is no place for any of this in the Father’s House. If we think there is then we are mistaken. If we think we can pretty much do as we please and God, because God is so good, will simply wave us on then we had better think again. Talk about recalculating!

In the Father’s House everyone lives his Way, the Way that Jesus has taught us. We have to put on his way of thinking to live in his house. We are asked by Christ himself to bear our own kinds of crosses like he bore his. To make sacrifices for those we love. To bear with the contradictions of life. To put up with the deceits and the lies about us. He bids us remain true, remain faithful. He asks us to continue to care even when those around us have stopped. That is his way and it is the way in the Father’s house. I am sure that we will have to recalculate from time to time. But God’s Spirit, God’s grace has been poured out. There are always growing pains when it comes to the Church. There surely were in the early years of the Church’s life. And there are now too. The Lord needs a genuine openness of heart from each of us if are to enter his Father’s house. Jesus uses very plain and simple language to convey to us a very simple but profound truth. The Father’s House is where we want to go. Jesus is the Way. The Spirit supplies the power, the energy. But it is all activated by us, by you and men—when we believe.