

WHEN HANDS TOUCH HANDS

God the Father sent his only begotten Son into our world so that we could know him, touch him, and love him. Jesus left himself to us as bread for our journey so that we could realize his presence, know his love and place our constant trust in him. Touch. Connection. Nourishment. Trust. For a moment today let us just look at our own hands as we listen and grow in comprehension of God at work in our own hands so familiar to us. A story.

“My grandma sat feebly on the patio bench. She didn’t move, just sat with her head down staring at her hands. When I sat down beside her she didn’t acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat the more I wondered if she was okay. Finally, not really wanting to disturb her but wanting to check on her at the same time, I asked if she was okay.

She raised her head, looked at me and smiled. ‘Yes, I’m fine. Thank you for asking,’ she said in a clear strong voice. ‘I didn’t mean to disturb you grandma but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were okay.’ ‘Have you ever looked at your hands?’ she asked. ‘I mean, really looked at your hands?’ I slowly opened my hands and stared at them. I turned them over, palms up and palms down. ‘No, I guess I never really looked at my hands,’ as I tried to figure out the point she was making.

Grandma smiled and related her story. ‘Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled, and weak, have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.’

‘They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child my mother taught me how to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my husband and wiped my tears when he went off to war. They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. Decorated with my wedding ring they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. They wrote my letters and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and my spouse.

They have held my children and grandchildren, consoled my neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn’t understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much else of me works

real well these hand hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of life. But more importantly it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of Christ.'

'I will never look at my hands the same again. I remember when God reached out and took my grandma's hands and led her home. When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children and husband I think of my grandma. I know she has been stroked, caressed, nourished and held by the hands of God in Jesus Christ. I too want to touch the face of God and feel the Lord's hands upon my face.'

There is a simple message here today. These words have fed us at a deep level. The gift of the Eucharist is all about God in the ordinary. God abides. God sustains God feeds. God comes. That is what our God does. We on the other hand, we have to come to the Lord and open our hearts in trust and allow him to nourish us in his own way. Let us pray for the grace of a greater love for our Eucharistic Lord whose own hands were pierced for us.