



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



HOMILY FOR MASS OF THE RESURRECTION FOR MSGR. HUBERT NEU

February 2, 2011

St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fort Worth, Texas

On this cold winter day we gather to pray for and give thanks for the life and ministry of Msgr. Hubert Neu. We are called, even if briefly, I believe to look past the challenges of the gray and cold winter day to the beauty, power and strength of the Church's Liturgy - the Mass of the Resurrection, to the day itself in the Church's calendar – the Presentation of the Lord where once again we hear that Christ is the light of the world, and then to the readings and the prayers in the Sacramentary for this Mass of the Resurrection. These are for priestly ordination, and quite appropriately so, since Hubert would have celebrated 60 years of ordination this year. We were already in fact planning for that. We shared a special link and bond because we have the same ordination anniversary date: May 30. [Although when he was ordained I was 20 days old!]

The Gospel for today is the Emmaus story, an account we hear during the Easter season. It is especially appropriate for a priest, since in the conclusion of the story, after a journey, the identity of the Risen Lord is revealed to the two disciples in the Breaking of the Bread: the Eucharist. The Eucharist is often described as the "Source and summit" for believers. This is even more so for the priest each and every day of his life. This was certainly true for Hubert. In one of our many conversations, in reflecting on the challenges of today, and the sometimes present desire in the life of Faith today for the extraordinary, he would say "But we have the Sacraments... isn't that the most important?"

The account of the road to Emmaus is a journey, and in St. Luke's Gospel everybody is on a journey, Jesus Himself especially. And in this journey we have the two Disciples with the Lord in their midst: Cleophas and the unnamed disciple. The unnamed disciple can stand for us: journeying from death, from pain, to embrace the most profound meaning of life: Eternal Life, the new Life of the Resurrection.

From the first moments of his life, Hubert journeyed with the Lord; from his baptism, his life in Gainesville, Lindsay and beyond, to St. John's Seminary, and then to all his assignments and all of his Diocesan endeavors and projects. And we journeyed with him... two disciples and more on the road to Emmaus, on the road to Eternal Life. The journey with Hubert was above all a journey of faith and priestly ministry in so many ways. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had the conversation with the Lord, and we all had ours with Hubert. Through my conversations with him, I grew in ministry and vocation and understanding of what the Lord wished of me. I daresay it was true for any of us. In all of our conversations, I learned about life here, faith here, and the history of our Diocese. And, even though I had been a pastor in a number of parishes, I learned from Hubert how to be calm. He was one, as I have said,

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one of the most "unflappable" people I had ever known. Whether it was when the ceiling fell in the rectory my first year here, or another adventures, the response was "WELL...." The conversations on the journey were funny, too: [mention here the High Mass in the Cathedral during the renovation!]. There were the funny stories about his journeys and pilgrimages to Las Vegas with Fr. Tyl and Msgr. King. He was one of the smartest men I knew when it came to parish and business administration. But, above all, his chief concern in any of his assignments, many of which we spoke about, was the people to whom he was assigned: God's flock was in his midst, and he did give them a Shepherd's care, just as St. Peter exhorts today.

When Fr. Pemberton and I were called on Friday evening, and when we arrived and said the prayers and blessing for the deceased, I noticed two things: his breviary was on his night stand, and he had on his walking shoes! And, I would say with certainty that if I had checked the ribbons in his breviary, I am sure, as precise as he was, and the priest that he was, they would have been set exactly where they should have been. This is an example and reminder to us all. Yet, he also had his walking shoes on. He was set for the journey, which is spoken of in the Gospel today. In his prayer, he was having his conversation with the Lord as the other Disciples, and his shoes showed that in faith, he was walking with the Lord whom he loved, and whom he served in all of his assignments, toward the Resurrection, that he embraced at the moment he was baptized, and that he lived so clearly, by his life and priestly ministry.

ETERNAL REST... Msgr. Hubert Neu,

+ Bishop Kevin Vann

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