

Breaking Good, Breaking Bad Homily from 1st Sunday of Lent 2014

Recently, I got addicted to a miniseries called, "Breaking Bad," a story about a man diagnosed with terminal cancer who decides he wants to do everything he can to financially provide for his wife and two children. He develops a unique formula for making a particular drug that he is able to sell through a dealer. His intentions were very noble; the means to making those intentions were illegal, destructive and morally bankrupt.

I was truly absorbed by the visual depiction of a human being spiraling out of control, then "devolving" into a human monster. The instant he realized the power he had with his "talent" and how much money he could make, he had a "breaking bad" experience that claimed his life for evil. While "breaking bad" he broke his marriage, his family, and indeed every relationship he had, especially the relationship he had with himself. This main character even developed a nickname to indicate his new identity as a human being defined by power and money and control. For me, watching this fictional character slowly becoming evil and dark was compelling.

I believe we can all have "breaking bad" experiences where we are overcome with destructive desires and impulses. Thankfully, these experiences are short-lived as we allow God's Grace to once again reclaim our hearts. This first Sunday of Lent takes us into the desert of temptation to face the darkness and refuse to give into to "breaking bad." The devil simply wanted Jesus to deny his identity and mission by taking short cuts and denying his mission to embrace and experience *all* the realities of human existence, particularly, pain, suffering and what we fear the most: death.

The Spirit led Jesus into the desert to face his own "breaking bad" moment by refusing to give in to the devil and thereby defining his life by the devil's terms. That same Spirit that led Jesus into the desert was the very Spirit that was "breathed" into Adam after God fashioned him out of clay. That breath of divinity is what claims us...seals us as children of God. We not only have a biological DNA but a spiritual one as well. We are created by God to have life and to live it in abundance. Our spiritual DNA has wired us to help God in the re-creation of the world. This power, lost by a breach that occurred in humanity at a definitive moment we call the "Fall," has been restored in baptism.

Baptism is our "breaking good" experience, one that defines us and our very humanity for goodness and beauty and Truth.

Lent is the springtime of allowing the Spirit to lead us into the desert to allow this "breaking good" experience to surface and be strengthened. We are destined to evolve into human beings who live lives of selfless love, building a world that brings people together in peace and hope. God wants to use our flesh and blood, our spirits and souls to transform the world.

Lent is the season that teaches us it's never too late to start again...to recommit our lives to Christ and allow his Presence and Love to define who we really are. We are destined to be totally and completely transformed by the Resurrection. And we don't have to wait...it is happening now, every time we say "No" to sin and "Yes" to Grace. Let's make this Lent an experience of "breaking good," allowing God's love and grace to shape