

Homily
2nd Sunday of Easter - A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
April 11-12, 2026

Acts 2: 42-47
Ps 118: 2-4, 13-15, 22-24
1 Pt 1: 3-9
Jn 20: 19-31



At the time I am recording this homily, I had noticed that at the Bordertown parish's YouTube channel, we have uploaded over 1,000 videos and have over 600 subscribers in light what we are doing. I serve a couple small parishes and we do not get a lot of people watching what we are doing. That is not the point. The point is that those who live in these communities, those who feel like we do not care, this is our outreach; this is our evangelization to tell our homebound parishioners

who are watching these Masses on their iPads and their computers. We know some of you in the states those across the pond, in the Philippines, Japan and Australia, those in New York and in California and in Arizona who have contacted us. We remember you. We love you and that is why we do these things for you.

Last particular weekend, we celebrated with individuals who received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. We will have all kinds of wonderful celebrations in upcoming weeks, including high school students receiving Confirmation and second graders receiving their First Communion.

During these celebrations, our churches normally are full. I say repeatedly that when we started our ministry together back in 2019, we only had 15 to 20 people who showed up to any given Mass at St. Patrick's. Now we often have full houses, especially on Easter Sunday when we have what is called our Christmas & Easter Catholics, our "Creasters" who only come twice a year. On those two dates, our "Creasters" fill our churches.

Concerning our Mass in Spanish, that liturgy did not even exist until

August of 2019; now, that Mass usually is larger than all the other Masses *combined*.

One of the problems I have when I celebrate these special Masses and when I record these videos occurs with one specific group of people who often are the “bane” to my existence – the photographers who are not respectful in church and do not follow the rules of the house. Many times, photographers wear hats in church and refuse to take them off. Photographers who are instructed *not* to do so decide for themselves that they want to enter the sanctuary to take pictures during the sacraments. So instead of the focus being on God and the Blessed Sacrament, the photographers wish to put the focus on them instead.

When this happens, then parents feel emboldened to come out of the pews to take pictures and disturb the sanctity of the Mass and the prayers offered. For this reason what we do is we assign one experienced photographer to come in and take all the pictures of all the kids and of all the adults receiving the sacraments. When we do this, we then we upload all those pictures on what is called the SmugMug website so that parents can download the pictures of whomever they

want and every person receiving sacraments gets their individual moment; every person gets what they want and the parents go home happy.

I remember that when I was graduating college and my parents wanted to take those pictures. I remember them telling me that sometimes kids do not want to stand for those pictures – it made me wonder if my siblings did not allow my parents to get their pictures. When I graduated from college, I made sure that my parents got whatever pictures they wanted... which drove me nuts.

That said, I quietly allowed them to take every picture they wanted. When I think about bishops who have to take these pictures for every major event and how this might drive them crazy (because they have to do it so often), I understand *why* do not want to take a whole lot of pictures. There are rules in this diocese concerning bishops *not* taking pictures with the kids because they just do it all the time; it becomes cumbersome for them.

That said, I *choose* to celebrate the Confirmation liturgy with the bishop's permission because I want those parents to have their moment

- I stand in front of the sanctuary after these Masses and wait until every single family has taken every single beloved picture that they want because, to them, those pictures represent an important moment in their family's life. Looking back at those pictures, the parents and their progeny will reminisce about the moments those pictures capture. Parents and their kids and will look back at their scrapbooks and their photo directories to remind themselves of this moment captured by that image with the priest.

For each family during those sacramental moments, that picture can be an entryway to the life of God that somebody stopped and took that moment with them as if they really cared... and they should; we should! We are representing God in those moments. We clerics know that people take these moments for granted. We clerics realize that like the ten-leper story, if we do this right, one (if any) may come back to say, "thank you" and we made it possible to save a soul.

We also understand that when we take that moment as ministers, as ordained clerics, as religious, when we stand there and let people take pictures with us, it is as if they are taking their picture with God and it is

important to them that they take that picture. We do this with a hope that a few of them come back or even stay in the faith. Sometimes only a few of them understand the importance of these sacraments and what this Precious Body and Blood actually means.

As ministers, we need to provide an entryway for these good souls to come back – we want them to be saved. We also know that our biggest obstacle is ourselves – the “Thomas” story applies to each of us in a way. We ministers need to be symbols of hope, not an obstacle to people. We must make God accessible; we must *not* make people question God by pulling back – we must bring God to others by making ourselves present to others.

What I try to do is respond to those who attend these services and wish to bring the faith more into their lives. Whenever somebody has asks me for something at the time I am celebrating this Mass or offering these sacraments, if a family who celebrates these moments want me to go and bless their house over barbecued ribs (do I *look* like I need barbecued ribs?) or if they wish spend time talking about issues of the faith, I try not to deny them the presence of God if I can. Sometimes

families respond in kind; one particular family, by the way, was kind enough to clean our entire church and clean our carpeting after one of these sacraments and chose to do the same thing over at St. Anne's as well. I wanted the families to know that I very much appreciate what they do for us.

God bless all of you who have stayed with us through all these videos, through all these years. You know how much we love you and how much we continue to do this for you. Please do not stop praying for us. Please understand that this this Mass, this "source and summit" of our Christian life is the gateway to heaven. Let us never take that life or these sacraments for granted. Let us embrace what God has given us. Let us give thanks to God for he is good and his mercy endures forever so we may share that light, that mercy, that resurrection, that grace and that love with all people that we meet. This is our prayer.