

Homily – Double diamond and 75th anniversaries
Pat Siemen, OP
Holy Rosary Chapter
St. Catherine’s Chapel
May 11, 2017

What an amazing privilege it is to stand here among you, our women who have lived with fidelity and zest, 50, 60, 70 and 75 years of vowed Dominican life! I did some calculations for the living double-diamond and 75 years Jubilarians. Together you have given **1,190 years** of service to God! Another 10 years and its **2,000**: do I hear it for 10 more years, anyone??!

As I look at you I realize that you are women who were generally born in the 1930’s - during the years of our nation’s devastating Depression. Your parents likely lived through World War I, - and you were teenagers during World War II. Many of you experienced the hardships and graces of sacrifice, on behalf of our country, and continuing as young members of our beloved Adrian and Edmund's communities. You knew firsthand what it meant to live simply and sustainably.

Sister Mary Philip Ryan, in *Amid the Alien Corn*, describes the early community women. She says they were “durable” women; women of “remarkable common sense.” These qualities, “durable” and “common sense” is what carried us through the wartimes, and into the days of the Second Vatican Council renewal. You were women who came to the community with experiences of hard working, struggling, loving families. You came to our congregational doors as resilient and generous women who were willing to sacrifice and do whatever was asked of you. You consecrated your lives to God, through your vows of Dominican obedience. You committed yourselves to preach with your lives. You created community through prayer, study, teaching, nursing, administration, and a myriad of other pastoral ministries. As chaplain Cathy Johnson said so recently, you committed yourselves “to **be** community with and for one another.”

As I work my way through re-reading “*Amid the Alien Corn*” I note how frequently Mary Phil described us as “a **beloved** community”. Despite all the changes we have lived through these 70-75 years ago, we are still a “beloved community”. So today we celebrate you, the women who have been the backbone of this community. You have labored and loved in fields

far and wide. You are the ones who took to heart the words of the Second Vatican Council and the words of the Prophet Micah that we heard in the first reading:

“You have been told, O people, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only this: to do right and act with justice; to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

You also imbibed the spirit of the beatitudes that we just heard in today’s Gospel by Matthew. The beatitudes remind us of the inner attitudes that are essential for us to be a community that is open to others, and that leads us into deeper friendship with God. The beatitudes are not only a call to external actions that bring forth God’s reign. They call for an equally important inner transformation. They call us to be poor in spirit, humble, merciful, and receptive to other’s ways of thinking. By mourning injustice and hungering for justice right relationships we are invited to act; and to have our own views – and lives - altered. This is an inner, spiritual process at work. It requires a certain detachment from one’s own ego and strongly held judgments and calls us to an embrace of diversity in its many forms.

Being “meek” as described in the beatitudes is often misunderstood today; it can be considered a denigrating term. But meekness can reflect an inner self-knowledge of one’s gifts and limits. Meekness, humility, is the opposite of self-importance, narcissism and ego inflation. It creates an open, welcoming space for Spirit to reside. It requires an awakened inner receptivity the Spirit and others presence in one’s life. This essential inner work creates space for us to identify our own spiritual hungers, and recognize it in others as well.

Each of you Jubilarians is a precious woman of the Gospel. You are also the salt of the Earth. You have seasoned the world with your unique saltiness, scattering your salted love into so many peoples’ lives. You have built not only the reign of God, but closer to home, you have also built - and sustain - this beloved Dominican community of ours.

We stand upon your shoulders. You have made us resilient for the future into which we are being called. Today we celebrate your 50, 60 , 70, and 75 years of fidelity as vowed Dominican women of Adrian, - and we give joyful thanks for your graced and vibrant lives.

Jubilato Deo!!