



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

Fr. Danny Murphy – 33rd Sunday of the Year 2016

Next weekend is the great feast of Christ the King and then we enter into the wonderful seasons of Advent and Christmas. We dare not deviate from the scriptures of any of those feasts; of those weekends. But we can do that today. Well, we're going to deviate from the scriptures – instead of reflecting on them, I'm going to share with you two stories with the hope, please God, the hope that these two stories will teach us lessons for life. The first story I read, the second story I experienced. Jane Nelson tells us that one day she received a call from a single mother who was caught in a real power struggle with her fifteen year old daughter. The mother found a six-pack of beer in her daughter's closet. She challenged her daughter: "Well Maria, what is this?" "Looks like a six-pack of beer, to me, Mom," Maria quipped. Her mother said, "Don't be smart with me, young lady! I want to know what this is all about. I want an explanation and I want it now!" Maria had to think very fast and she says: "Oh mom, I forgot to tell you, I'm holding this for a friend of mine!" "You don't expect me to believe that, do you?" retorted the mother. Maria got angry, she stomped into

her bedroom and slammed the door. The mother was seeking advice from her, when Jane Nelson asked the mother: "Why were you so concerned when you found the six-pack?" "Because, I don't want my daughter to get into trouble." "And why don't you want your daughter to get into trouble?" "I don't want anything to ruin her life." "And why don't you want anything to happen that could ruin her life?" And the mother sobbed and gently said: "Because I love her!" "Do you think Maria got that message? Of course not," Jane Nelson concluded. Then she continued: "What do you think would happen if you started with that message? If you said: 'honey, I love you so much that I got so scared when I found the six-pack because I don't want anything to ever hurt you. Honey, let's talk about this because I'll do anything to make sure that nothing ever hurts you. Can we sit down and talk through it?'" The lesson in life that I learned from that story? How do I handle my conflicts? How do I try to resolve or manage my conflicts? How do you deal with your conflicts? Do I take the wisdom of the great St. Catherine of Sienna to heart who says: "Speak the truth, but always with love." It seems to me that's what Pope Francis is attempting to do on an almost daily basis – to uphold our Catholic values while being merciful, non-judgmental, all-inclusive as was Jesus. If you were Maria's mom, what approach do you think you would have taken?

Now for a story that happened to me a couple of years ago in Brooklyn. One day a young woman visited me, she said that she had just found out that she was pregnant. Her boyfriend demanded that she have an abortion and he told her, "If you don't have an abortion, I am leaving you." The girl said that she was a Catholic and didn't want to have an abortion but if her boyfriend left her, I wouldn't be able to pay the rent which was \$795. She assured me that she had a job, that she would be able to get back on her feet and be okay, but there was no way she could pay that month's rent. So I gave her the \$795 because I didn't want her to have an abortion. To make a long story short, I was taken! There wasn't a thread of truth in the story. She was a fraud, I was a victim. The lesson in life that I learned?

She sold her soul for \$795. Maybe I wasn't the only priest that she fooled with her story, but whatever she did, was it worth it? Is it ever worth it? Doesn't Jesus tell us: "What profit do you show if you gain the whole world and forfeit your soul in the process?" So I asked myself, maybe you might want to ask yourself: "Have I, will I ever sell my soul." Another lesson I learned from that is this: Just because I was taken, doesn't mean that I stop giving. Yes, I have to be much more prudent, and more careful, but we can't stop doing good just because other people take advantage of our goodness, can't let that happen. As St. Paul says: "Do the good that you do for God, not for other people."