



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 – Easter Sunday Morning – April 16, 2017

Before we reflect upon Easter, allow me please to thank our musicians and especially, Dan Kroger, our music director for all the hard work they put into Holy Week and all of our Easter Masses! By the way, I don't know if you are aware of a story about Dan. Some years ago, on one weekend, our pastor, Fr. Murphy was going to give an appeal for money at all of our Masses, he spoke to Dan and said: "At the conclusion of my appeal, sing a song, any song that you want, but a song that people know, that will put people in a good mood so that they would contribute more generously." Fr. Murphy concluded his appeal with these words: "Anyone who is going to pledge ten thousand dollars or more, please stand!"

Immediately, Dan starts to sing the Star Spangled Banner, everyone stood and the parish raised a fortune! Dan told me that the other day he was visiting our Museum of Art and he couldn't help overhearing a haughty woman ask the procurator: Is this monstrosity that I

am looking at "MODERN ART??" With great dignity, the procurator replied, "No ma'am, that monstrosity you're looking at is called a MIRROR!" No more fooling' around, it's Easter, we better get started reflecting on Easter. Now, we'll start with an Easter story and it involves Luciano Pavarotti. Honestly, I'm much more comfortable talking about Presley than Pavarotti, but Pavarotti is an Easter story, so here goes. When he was a boy, his father encouraged him to sing. When he was a teenager, his father engaged the top tenor in Italy to tutor Luciano. But Luciano was torn, he loved opera, but he thought he wanted to be a teacher. So while he was being taught opera, he attended teacher's college. When he graduated teacher's college he said to his father: "What should I do? I love opera, but I also want to be a teacher. What should I do?" His father replied, "Luciano, don't sit between two chairs. If you do you'll fall through. You have to choose one chair." The same is true for me and you: we can't sit on two chairs, we have to choose one chair. Applying it to today, we have to choose whether to believe in Easter or not! We have to make that choice – it's one or the other. If we choose that we believe in Easter, then we'll understand that life is a continuum: it begins with conception and it never ends – it goes on through all eternity. The day when I definitively chose which chair that I would sit on occurred on an Easter Sunday morning when I was a student in the seminary. All of a sudden, like a bolt of lightning, a wave of grace washed over me. For the first time in my life I really knew that, despite all my sins, God loved me. God loved me a lot! Up to that point in my life, I thought that God would love me if I earned that love. Up to that point in my life, I

thought that God was pleased with me only when I was perfect. And since I was never perfect, God was never pleased with me. Up to that point in my life, I thought that heaven was a reward. And I knew that I didn't deserve that reward. And then on that glorious Easter Sunday, the tyranny was broken and I understood that God's love is pure grace, pure gift – unearned – undeserved – unconditional. You can't do anything to get it, because God already gave it! Finally that became crystal clear for me. My hero of Holy Week is St. Peter. Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus. They both bitterly regretted what they had done. Jesus forgave them both. Judas was unable to accept that forgiveness. He didn't trust that he was still loved despite his terrible sin. Judas went out and hanged himself. Peter was able to accept forgiveness. He trusted that despite his terrible sin, he was still loved. Peter became the rock upon which our church is built. We have to stop hanging ourselves!! We have to trust that God's love is reckless without any right reason, no matter what! We have to decide on which chair we're going to sit. We have to decide to choose the chair that believes in Easter. If we choose that chair, if we choose to believe in Easter, then we will understand that we're going to heaven! We're going to heaven not because we're so good, but because God's so good! We're going to heaven because heaven is our inheritance as God's beloved children. Easter means, we're going to heaven, that's what Easter means! So, here's a suggestion: since Easter means, we're going to heaven, instead of wishing one another Happy Easter, say instead: "I'll see you in heaven!" What makes Easter happy is that

