



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 – 4th Sunday of Easter 2016

We will focus on one theme and one topic in the homily, but before we get there, let's have a glance at one sentence from today's scripture readings. It's from the last sentence from the first reading: "the disciples were filled with joy." We know that the word DISCIPLE in scripture means "a follower of Jesus". Isn't that US? You and I: are followers of Jesus and we wouldn't BE here if we weren't! It says that as his followers WE are to be filled with joy. The CHALLENGE, is to be filled with joy even in the face of so many crosses that we often have to bear. How, then can we be filled with joy when we carry those crosses? We can do so if we realize that the joy of which Jesus speaks is INNER joy. It is the joy of which Jesus spoke at the last supper: "My wish is that my joy be in you and your joy may be complete." Also: "Your hearts will be filled with joy that no one can take away from you!" So I am to be filled

with joy no matter what happens. Which means, I can have joy INSIDE when I am not so joyful OUTSIDE.

Now, on to today's topic. In today's scriptures we hear that Paul and Barnabas were COURAGEOUS. They were being violently abused and persecuted, but they kept on preaching; kept on doing what was right despite opposition. If WE can keep doing the right thing even in the face of opposition, then we know we too have courage. Let me ask you this: Who is the most courageous person you know, or know of? (Pause to consider this). We could consider some of our American patriots: Nathan Hale or Patrick Henry in this vein, or perhaps firefighters or police officers. When I was younger, I thought that perhaps a circus tiger tamer was the most courageous person! For me, now, the most courageous person is someone who continues to trust God no matter what! For example: I have friend whose father died instantly in a tragic automobile accident when she was seventeen. Later, her husband died at thirty-five of a brain aneurysm leaving her with two children aged two and five. She could easily have become bitter but instead continues to trust God and attends daily Mass. To me, that's courage. I have another friend who is eighty-three and is confined to a wheel chair. He married late, had no children and all of his siblings have died. When his wife, who was his caregiver, died he realized he could no longer take care of himself, nor could he live alone – he had to go to a nursing home. When I visited him and asked how he felt about all of this, he could only echo what St. Francis de Sales wrote: "The same God who

takes care of me today, will do so tomorrow, and all my tomorrows." What about Michelangelo who, in his later years, realized that he was gradually going blind. He remained joyful and never complained. When a young apprentice asked him: "Don't you realize you are going blind"? He replied: "Of course I realize it, but God has been good to me all my life and will be good to me when I'm blind." That's courage! What about the psalmist who famously wrote: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...when I walk in the dark valley, I will fear no evil...for you are there with your rod and your staff to give me courage..." Don't you love this verse from one of our hymns: "No storm can shake my inmost calm, While to that rock I'm clinging. Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing"? How about the author of Footprints (see attachment below)? Or how about the person who wrote this verse: "I know nothing of tomorrow, except that the love of God will rise before the sun – the love of God will rise before the sun." So, who is the most courageous person you know? It could well be yourself, if no matter what happens on the OUTSIDE, you are filled with joy on the INSIDE!