



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 – 5th Sunday of Easter 2016

Last Sunday, after Mass a father told me that during my homily, his young son turned to him and whispered: "Dad, if we give them the money now, will they let us go?" I have BAD news for that little rascal! Last week we talked about ONE reading, this week we are going to talk about TWO readings! Well...we better get started or we won't be home until next Tuesday! In our first reading, Paul and Barnabas reassured and encouraged other people of the early church. In fact, the very name, BARNABAS, actually means "one who encourages others." So, we should ask ourselves...do WE encourage other people...do WE build up other people? Often, we really don't know what's going on with other people. Isn't it true that other people often wear masks? We may know that the outer veneer often hides what is going on inside. What we see, may not reflect the inner reality. We may not know

what's going on behind those masks, behind the walls of their homes, behind the walls of their hearts. There might be marital issues, medical issues, issues of financial stress, family stress, employment issues, fears, guilt, grief, sadness, loneliness and much, much more that people have to deal with. So...be a Barnabas! Be one who encourages. There is no one in this church who canNOT encourage others. Now, let's take a look at the last sentence in today's Gospel: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Consider this: in the first three centuries of Christianity, there was a 40% increase in conversions to Christianity every ten years. In 40AD, there were about 1,000 members. By 350AD, there were 33million members! That is phenomenal growth and the best explanation seems to be how Christians reacted during various epidemics that ravaged the Roman Empire. These epidemics affected the whole population of the Empire and occurred at least once a century. When the epidemics came, the pagans panicked and fled leaving behind their cities and homes. They abandoned their families and friends who had fallen ill and did not even bother to bury their dead. They fled, but the Christians stayed and cared for the sick: both pagans and Christians. They also buried the dead: both pagans and Christians. This wonderful witness attracted many to convert to Christianity. Again, Jesus tells US today: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The early Christians did this and brought many disciples to Jesus. Today a big "Buzzword" in catholic circles is EVANGELIZATION. On this topic, countless meetings have been held, countless books and articles have been written. In Brooklyn there is a 24/7 Cable

television station called Evangelization TV. We often try to come up with the best ways to attract people to the Church and BACK to the Church. We are trying SO HARD to evangelize, and please God may our efforts bear great fruit. But, we COULD go back to the basics, Jesus told us how to do it: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." If they did this back then, we can certainly do the same today! NOW, I am going to attempt a HUGE STRETCH and see if we can connect our two reflections, from the first reading and the Gospel. I am going to do this with the title of a song, that for some of you is WAY before your time – from the 1950's! I believe it was sung by Jill Corey and the words are: "We belong to a mut-u-al admiration society, (my baby and me)." Wouldn't it be wonderful if we ALL belonged to the Mutual Admiration Society, perhaps founded by St. Barnabas? If we did belong to it, don't you think we would be very effective evangelizers?