

Presentation at all the Masses – [St Teresa's, SI, NY](#)

By: [Billy McDermott](#)

Date: 10/08/08

Words: 842

I was the “seed on the rock.” The shallow seed would bloom quickly and majestically and then soon thereafter burn with the blazing sun.

Fr O'Hara once told me that I was “both brothers” in the Prodigal Son.

Today's gospel reading is quite profound. Two commandments, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Second, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

A prayer given to her nuns by Mother Teresa goes like this, “Give yourself fully to Jesus, allow Him to use you to accomplish great things on the condition you believe much more in His love than in your weakness.”

Up until three years ago, how could I love my neighbor when I turned my back on my own parents? I always thought my neighbor was the person living next door to me. No, it is you and you and you. And today, I love you all just the way you are. You see, three years ago, I learned how to forgive. I learned how to love. I learned how to be forgiven. I asked the Lord Jesus for help and so can you, you and you. I began to believe more in His love than in my weakness. Next week's Mission, right here at St Teresa's will help you too. “Come and See.”

My parents died with me being estranged from them. I was estranged from the Catholic Church as well. Yet something very mystical happened to me on the third day after my mother died - something very powerful and positive. Yet, I still can't describe it.

It would take another five months before St Therese would lead me back to her namesake right here. I would meet our Pastor, Fr John O'Hara for the first time and confess after thirty five years. Never before did I ever experience such warmth and kindness. Fr O'Hara, was re-introducing me to his friend, Jesus Christ. We expect to do a lot of re-introducing during this Mission. “Come and See.”

My brother in law recently died from complications from surgery. He endured five months of “inhuman suffering.” My wife and I and our three children were his principle caretakers. He was always like a brother to me, a best friend. Yet, I fell more deeply in love with him on the weekend he slipped into his final coma. His care was so poor, I can only sadly name on one hand his caregivers who even remotely cared for him. I forgave them. It was as if his caretakers were the Roman soldiers pounding the nails into Jesus. All I could say is what He said, “Father, forgive them for they do not what they do.” When you forgive, you release. You forget. The people who hurt you will never be a

burden on your mind. Only his beautiful memory. This coming Mission will help.
“Come and See.”

I did for my brother in law Bobby what I should have done for my Mother and Father. It was too late for me to fall into the arms of my Father as the Son did in the Prodigal Son. He had already died. But Mother Mary held out her hand, and led me to her Son Jesus. “Jesus, there is someone whom I would like You to meet.” Through the words given to Fr O’Hara at ordination, he was able to speak on behalf of Jesus. “I absolve you.” Psalm 51 tells us we get a new spirit and a new heart. Next week’s Mission beginning on November 3rd and lasting for four days can lead you to receiving a new heart and spirit too. “Come and See.”

Jesus said, “What you do for the least of me, you do for Me.” My brother Bobby (we called each other brothers) was away from the Church for fifty years. He turned down an offer to visit with a priest before he went into the hospital. Waking up from his first surgery after two weeks, I asked him again. He nodded yes, with a smile I will cherish forever. Fr Xavier was forgiving him two hours later. Father Xavier asked Bob as Jesus had asked Mary before He raised her brother Lazarus, “Do you believe?” He nodded yes, again with a smile that never seems to go away.

His favorite song was “Amazing Grace.” Shortly after his death, I read the words for the very first time.

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

‘It was grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,

I have already come;
‘This grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

“Follow me” and “Come and See.”