

**Apostolate to the Handicapped Mass
December 1, 2007
The 40th Anniversary of the First TV Mass for the
Handicapped – Channel 3
Monroe High School, Monroe, WI
St. Victor’s Church, Monroe
Homily Preached by Bishop William Bullock**

Texts:

Luke 5: 17-26

Paralytic-stretcher-picks up mat and walks home glorifying God. “We have seen incredible things today.”

Isaiah 35: 1-10

“Strengthen hands that are feeble; make firm knees that are weak; make eyes of the blind open; make ears of the deaf hear; ...sorrow and mourning will flee.”

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

These readings assigned to this Mass from Isaiah and St. Luke give us a focus for our Eucharistic Celebration today. It is a joy for me to be here with you as celebrant of this Mass as we give thanks to God once again for our disabled handicapped persons.

In a special way we give thanks to God for forty years of Holy Mass brought into the living rooms of literally thousands of people.

This is the specialness of the occasion! But the Christmas gathering of many of our disabled here today causes us to rejoice in the Lord, to give thanks to Him for His goodness and for the opportunity to care for the disabled.

As we care for them each day our hearts are filled with love. Our hands are extended in loving service to those who need us. Be the limitation mental or physical or both we have been entrusted with an exceptional opportunity to serve. For this we are grateful. Those we serve, each in his or her own way, reach back to say thanks to us ... and they do it in such a genuine way.

Mother Teresa and all the great saints of the Church remind us that at our individual and the general judgment, we will be grateful to God for having used us to care for His special and exceptional people – namely the handicapped.

Part of our salvation plan in God is that He sent us people to care for and love. Because of them we do not lose our way. Because of them we are saved.

People in full health of mind and body can very easily forget how easy it is to think things through, to be mobile in every aspect of their physical life. But the handicapped, the disabled, must wait on us for help, for assistance, for understanding, and for care.

Jesus reminds us as we reach out to do for others, that whatever we do for them, we do unto Him. Saint Luke describes the man, paralyzed for a long time, lying on a mat, needs to be let down from the rooftop in order to be placed in front of Jesus. Jesus quickly responds by telling him to “stand up” and pick up his mat and walk.

The man willingly, with great glee, with great joy, “takes up his mat and walks, jumping for joy.” St. Luke simply concludes his Gospel with the words: “We have seen incredible things today.”

Throughout these 40 years, 52 Sundays in each of those years, plus Christmas adds up to 2,120 Masses on Channel 3. What a gift. We might say – how incredible that what began as a free gift of television time adds up to an incredible number, affecting hundreds of thousand of people whose access to Sunday worship, to Holy Mass has been available free of charge.

“We indeed have seen incredible things today,” and we rejoice and give thanks to God, to Channel 3, to Monsignor Thomas Campion, celebrant and able preacher at these Masses, and the tireless efforts of stage crews, commentators, interpreters, servers, and professional camera people.

May God be praised! May God continue to bless us, the handicapped, the donors, the workers and all the people who work to bring the televised Mass to our handicapped.

Extra Notes

We believe in life everlasting and because we do, it affects the way we live here on earth.

We pledge ourselves to promote life from womb to tomb, from the moment of conception to natural death.

We believe in God, our creator. We believe in a culture of life and pledge our resources to support all and every good effort to preserve, promote and protect human life.

Praise God! Sing joyful thanks as we continue Christ's ministry to His people.

In God's final Kingdom we shall all share fully and completely in all aspects of human life. There will be no more war, no violence, no terrorism, no death, no sickness, no hunger, and no want. There will be only "life" and this Gospel as given us by St. Luke where a paralytic lies helpless on his mat, rises at the command of Jesus, and jumps up in joy and exultation.

Addendum to Homily For the Handicapped Mass

2007

Incredible - What does it mean? How can we apply its meaning? God is the true measure of all things we are not. We are his creatures and we believe that we receive a measure of His gift in order to interpret the full meaning of life.

Years ago the communists said of “religion” – “it is the opium of the people.” “It is pie in the sky.” We feed it to people to keep them quiet and subdued.

No, religion is for real. And the Catholic Church while often mocked by the media for its claim to be true authentic and possess the complete revealed truth. We are truly one, holy Catholic and apostolic. We are one because God the Father is one with His only begotten Son, Jesus whose Church we are. We are Holy because God is our Founder. We are Catholic because Christ commanded the apostles to preach to “all” nations. We are a universal Church. We are also apostolic because we were founded as Church upon the 12 apostles.

Our God created us for heaven – for the life and world that is to come. But the Word of God, New Testament points to life in that Heaven and earth.

We believe in the life of the world to come, therefore we keep our eyes focused on that everlasting reality and we keep our hearts loving our gentle, forgiving, all caring God. Very special in God's eyes and heart are handicapped persons, their caregivers and families who support them.

Amen!

Papal Encyclical

Hope is a keyword in Biblical Faith and from our mother's knee we learned the prayer called "An Act Of Hope." It began, O' my God, relying on your infinite promises, I hope to attain the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Pope Benedict, just yesterday gave to the Church and the world a new encyclical on Hope.

As we work with our handicapped not as objects of our charity, those of lesser mobility of mind and body, but as fellow human beings, we hope for them and work in hope for them.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us in his encyclical, "*In Hope We Are Saved*," *Spe Salvi*, "A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer. When no one listens to me anymore, God still listens to me. When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God. When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation that goes beyond the human capacity for hope, he can help me. When I have plunged into complete solitude ...; if I pray I am never totally alone." #32, *Spe Salvi*