

FOR THE GOOD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Bishop Joseph V. Adamec

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CONFIRMATION, - A SERIOUS STEP

There was something special about this year's Holy Week liturgical services. They are always special. However, this year, what we celebrated seemed to touch our Faithful more deeply than usual, - for whatever reason. I am still hearing wonderful comments about the Christ Mass, even from individuals who were not there but heard from others who were.

It was a good Lent and a wonderful Holy Week. But, even at that, there is no way that we can totally fathom the depth of our Lord's love as expressed in the events that we have just commemorated. Nevertheless, there are situations that occur around us, which can give us some insight. It is as if the Lord allows them for our instruction and encouragement. Jesus taught us how to read such messages. He would say something like, "You know how this or that happens in your everyday life? Well, the Kingdom of God is something like that." He still does it.

I cannot get over the parallel between the Sacred Triduum and what happened on the Indian Ocean during those same days this year. You will recall that on that Wednesday, pirates seized the MV Maersk Alabama with a 21 member American crew. The captain of the vessel was the now celebrated hero, Richard Phillips.

The crew fought back the best they could, not having any guns on board. The Captain saw the seriousness of the situation and offered himself to the pirates in exchange for the lives of his crew. The pirates must have been delighted with the arrangement. I believe that Captain Phillips is a Catholic, certainly a Christian. It is as if he understood what the Lord had done for him and he was willing to do the same. "Take me and let these others go," is, basically, what Jesus said. "Take my life and let the others live."

On Good Friday, the Lord cried out in his abandonment. Nevertheless, the crucifixion continued. That same day, the Captain tried to escape his situation. However, he was recaptured. When all seemed lost on Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday came. Christ escaped death, and so did Captain Phillips, also on Easter Sunday. The Lord willingly gave his life for the lives of others such as ourselves, but did not lose his in the process. Neither did the Captain.

I know that we cannot fully appreciate what went on during those days on the Maersk Alabama. However, if we could and we multiplied it as many times as our calculators will allow, we might be able to comprehend a little better what it is that Christ did during the days that we observe as the Sacred Triduum. Those days reflect the depth of the love that the Divine Captain has for us. The pirates have been defeated, - they being, of course, Satan and his devils.

The time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost is the Easter Season. It is the time when I administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. In my homily this year, I am drawing the parallel between Christ and Captain Phillips. It is a parallel that needs to be drawn between Christ and ourselves, as persons confirmed in the Faith and called to be about life.

We, too, are called to make choices that enrich the lives of others, even though such choices might require some sacrifice on our part. As mature, confirmed Christians, we promised to follow in the ways of the Lord. This is his way. Confirmation is a serious step.