

## HOMILY

### *The Easter Vigil* *Saturday, April 11, 2009*

**Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski**  
**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
**Davison, Michigan**

Do you remember the *Legend of the Touchstone*? It's a great story to recall on Easter. According to that ancient legend, if you could find the touchstone on the coast of the Black Sea and hold it in your hand, everything you touched would turn to gold. You could recognize the touchstone by its warmth. The other stones would feel cold; but when you picked up the touchstone, it would turn warm in your hand.

Once a man sold everything he had and went to the coast of the Black Sea in search of the touchstone. He began immediately to walk along the shoreline picking up one stone after another in his diligent search for the touchstone. He was consumed with this dream. He wanted desperately to find this miraculous stone. However, after several days had passed, he suddenly realized that he was picking up the same stone again and again. So he devised a plan: pick up a stone; if it's cold, throw it into the sea.

Then one morning he went out to continue his search for the touchstone. He picked up a stone. It was cold. He threw it into the sea. He picked up another stone. Cold! He picked up another stone. It turned warm in his hand; but before he realized what he was doing, *he threw it into the sea!*

That's a good parable for Easter. The reason being is that it can so easily happen to you and me. We can come upon a miraculous moment like Easter—we can feel it turn warm in our hands—but then, before we realize what we are doing, *we throw it away!* Absentmindedly, mechanically, without letting it sink in, we toss it aside and miss the miracle of Easter.

This shows us dramatically that God has the power to redeem. He can, through the miracle of grace, turn bad things into good things, change things, and make things better for you.

On Easter morning the women came to the tomb in sadness, in defeat, in grief, in disillusionment. But much to their surprise, they found out first hand about God's power to redeem. There at the empty tomb on Easter morning they found out

dramatically that God can turn defeats into victories, despair into hope, and death—yes, even death—into life. God has the power to redeem. He can turn the heartache of Good Friday into the hallelujah of Easter morning.

God has the power to redeem! That's the good news of our faith. It means that no defeat needs to be final—no heartache has to last forever. Good Fridays will come into our lives, but if we hang in and trust God, he has an Easter morning waiting for us on the other side.

Easter reminds us that people like you and me can be redeemed. We don't have to stay the way we are. We can be forgiven, reshaped, reclaimed, resurrected.

Is there something in your life that needs to be changed? Is there a secret sin, a vengeful spirit, a clenched fist, a bad temper, a slack of commitment, a hateful attitude in you, something that you would be better off without? If you'll let him, God can change you. He can bring you and me out of the tombs that imprison us.

Quite often, whenever I need to go into Flint, I make it a point to drive by my old neighborhood off Dort Highway by Buick 36 where I grew up. It's a part of Flint that is anything but beautiful. It's a place where they dump scrap iron, old bottles, wrecked cars, and broken machinery. Recently while going by, I saw great quantities of scrap iron being loaded onto a railroad car. It will go to a factory to be reclaimed, to be melted down and remade into something new. It may come out as surgeon's tools or fenders for a new car or maybe even a steeple for a church. Who knows what it may be? But it will be new and useful and valuable. Now if we can do that with our old scrap iron, how much more can God do with human beings, with people like you and me? The good news of Easter is he wants to! He wants to reclaim us. He wants to reshape us. He wants to redeem us.

***He is risen!***

***He lives!***

***He wants us to rise and live too!***

This year seize and celebrate and embrace the incredible good news of Easter. In particular, this year let me urge and encourage you to truly let Easter enter in....

