

Homily for the Third Sunday of Advent (A)  
St. Joseph's Neier December 14-15, 2013  
Rev. Kevin Schmittgens

Central Idea: We need to be patient and open ourselves up to the amazing surprises of God.

*Go and tell John what you hear and see:  
the blind regain their sight,  
the lame walk,  
lepers are cleansed,  
the deaf hear,  
the dead are raised,  
and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.*

It was characterized as a “solution without a problem.” I call it a happy accident.

Today, I got to preside at the wedding of one of my favorite students. And, if it were not for Dr. Spencer Silver and a man by the name of Art Fry, it might not have ever happened.

If the names do not ring a bell, I would invite you to look at this, simple little piece of paper, because Dr. Silver's and Dr. Fry's are responsible for it. Indeed they were the glue that brought this couple together.

Literally.

Not making this story up. Dr. Spencer Silver was a scientist who attempted to create a super strong adhesive glue. He failed. Instead he created the exact opposite. Silver developed a low-tack, reusable, pressure-sensitive adhesive. For five years he shopped around his product. Apparently, no one was in the market for a glue that did not stick very well. Enter Art Fry. Art had a problem. His hymn book at church was a mess. He would use book marks to mark which hymns he was going to sing, but they would slip and fall out. He dreams of a light adhesive which would gently hold his place. He remembers Dr. Silver's anemic glue. And...Eureka! The Post-It Note was born and Sammi and Jason were destined the altar.

I have done a crash course in Post-It Notes over the past 24 hours. I know more about them than I could every have imagined. For instance, did you know that it would take 506.880,000 notes to circle the world? Now you know! Did you know that the designer Ilze Vitolina created a line of fashionwear fashioned from Post-It notes? Now you know! And finally our couple's relationship began with a simple Post-It note that simply said, “Have a good day!”

Sometimes it is the simplest things that mean the most. That small little Post-It note, led to many, many more. The couple expressed their love via Post-Its. And then, finally, one day, a note went up secretly on the wall: Will you marry me?? And the rest is history. (I get similar Post-It notes from Cheryl Amato who cleans my rectory, but they only inform me where she put the bathroom tissue.)

Sometimes, when we are impatiently waiting for what we think we need, what we think we long for, grace and blessing appear right before us and we miss it. That, it seems to me is how God works in my life. I go looking for a big old sign. I try to solve a problem I have. I want God to communicate with me in a powerful, clear manner. And meanwhile, while I am fretting and anxious, along comes grace to slap me across the head and wake me from my fitful sleep.

Advent is a time for openness. It is a time to put aside what we think we need and seek what we truly need, sometimes without even knowing it.

Later on, I will be baptizing a little baby named Lily. I have been a baptizing fool over the past several weeks. And when I see a baby, what I always notice is that they are like sponges. A little soggy at times, to be sure, but curiously open and receptive to almost everything imaginable. Their little eyes and ears are drinking in experience after experience and scientists have even speculated that the positive things that they encounter not only balance them and center them and help them, those things even change them to their very cores. Something as simple and as basic as a mother's cuddle and touch and transform a child into a caring and compassionate adult.

We long for that openness in this season. We need to find all the places where God has placed his "Post-It" notes of love. In the beauty of creation, in the miracle of life, in the warmth of friendship, and even, ironically, in the struggles and strains of everyday life. We need to constantly be surprised by grace and have our eyes opened, our ears hear the melody of love, and our crippled hearts begin walking again in the paths of righteousness.

When the groom proposed, he used a Post-it note.