

Ordinary 23C - 2025

Anecdotes from: <https://frtonyshomilies.com/>

"Beats me too." A man remarked to a woman sitting to his left at a Super Bowl game that he was surprised that there was an empty seat between them. The woman said, *"Oh, that belonged to my husband, but he died."* The man offered his condolences and went on to express amazement that another member of her family of a relative of friend hadn't wanted to use his seat. *"Beats me too,"* said the woman, *"but they all insisted they needed to go to his funeral!"* — How's that for a story about values and commitment?

The cost paid by great musicians: Someone once said to Ignaz Paderewski, the great pianist, *"Sir, you are a genius."* He replied, *"Madam, before I was a genius, I was a drudge."* He continued: *"If I missed practice one day, I noticed it; if I missed practice two days, the critics noticed it; if I missed three days, my family noticed it; if I missed four days, my audience noticed it."* It is reported that after one of Fritz Kreisler's concerts a young woman said to him, *"I would give my life to be able to play like that."* He replied, *"That's what I gave."* — The door is narrow. Why should we think we can "drift" into the Kingdom of God? The Christian life is a constant striving to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it. We need to strive because there are forces of evil within us and around us, trying to pull us down.

The NCAA cross-country championship: Back in 1994, 128 runners lined up to compete in the NCAA cross-country championship in Riverside, California. Unfortunately, one of the turns on the 10,000-meter course was not well marked. Only five of the 128 runners stayed on the correct path. Mike Delcavo was the first runner to notice the problem. He began waving at the other runners to follow him, but most refused. Can you blame them? One-hundred-and-twenty-three runners took the wrong path, only five took the right one. What did the 123 runners think of Delcavo? He commented later, *"They thought it was funny that I went the right way."* (*Leadership*, Summer 1994, p. 49.) — We all like to think that we're on the right path; what a horrifying awakening it will be to discover we have taken the broad way leading to eternal damnation!

Seeing the white rabbit and chasing it: One day, a young disciple of Christ who wanted to become everything that God had in mind for him visited the home of

an elderly Christian seeking his advice. He had heard that this old man had never lost his love for Christ in all the years he had known the Savior.

The old man smiled and replied, *"Let me tell you a story: One day I was sitting here quietly in the sun with my dog. Suddenly a large white rabbit ran across in front of us. Well, my dog jumped up, and took off after that big rabbit. He chased the rabbit over the hills with a passion. Soon, other dogs joined him, attracted by his barking. What a sight it was, as that pack of dogs ran barking across the creeks, up stony embankments and through thickets and thorns! Gradually, however, one by one, the other dogs dropped out of the pursuit, discouraged by the course and frustrated by the chase. Only my dog continued to hotly pursue the white rabbit. In that story, young man, is the answer to your question."* The young man sat in confused silence. Finally, he asked, *"I don't understand. What is the connection between the rabbit chase and the quest for God?"* "You failed to understand," answered the older man, *"because you failed to ask the obvious question— 'Why didn't the other dogs continue on the chase?' And, the answer to that question is that they were only joining the excitement of the group. They had not seen the rabbit. Unless you have actually seen the rabbit, the chase is just too difficult. You will lack the passion and determination necessary to keep up the chase."*

And this brings us to the pertinent topic of this particular discourse: **Have you seen the Lord?** Have you really seen Him? Do you realize and accept that He is carrying a cross? Do you understand what it means to be a Christian? In order to follow after Him, the first prerequisite is that we actually see Him and understand what it means to be called to Christian discipleship. (Rev. Byron Perrine).

"We saw your smoke signal." The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed earnestly to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but no one seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and in which to store his few possessions. One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me!" he cried. Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. The weary man asked his rescuers: *"How did you know I was here?"* They replied: "We saw your smoke signal." — God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering. But we fail to see the invisible hand of God. (Fr. Bobby Jose).