

Get up!

By Rev. Edgar F. Solis

Introduction:

Let's celebrate! Today is the day of the Lord! A strong reason to praise and worship God! We are also celebrating Mother's Day! A double reason to come to Church and be grateful!

Even though some have lost the practice of attending church on Sunday, I have thought of some ideas to make it possible for everyone to attend church the following Sundays, especially during summer.

I will propose to the church council a new program.

We are going to have a special "No Excuse Sunday"

Here are some ideas:

- Recliner chairs will be placed in the Narthex and Library for those who say, "Sunday is my only day to sleep in."
- We can also incorporate a special section here in the sanctuary with lounge chairs for those who feel our pews are too hard.
- We will have steel helmets for those who say, "The roof would cave in if I ever came to Church."
- We'll plan for relatives and friends to be in attendance for those who can't come to church and cook dinner!
- We can also invite our neighbors, The Unity Point hospital doctors, and nurses for those who plan to be sick on Sunday!

- The Sanctuary will be decorated with Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the church without them!

All of this to make it possible for people to attend Church on Sunday!

We all do our best to keep the good things in life, we all make an effort to keep our beloved relationships close to us, and we all care about what matters in life.

The members of this small faith community on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in Joppa, according to the Bible reading this morning, lost one of the pillars of the church – actually an essential person for the whole community.

As we read it, what they do after Dorcas's death is decide to grab on to a desperate hope.

Context matters:

Rev. Dr. Derek Weber, Director of Preaching Ministries in Indiana and Arkansas, mentions that *The threads that bound Tabitha to the community were many, and they were strong. And when the illness and death came to sever those threads, the community was bereft. Their hearts were broken, so they reached out to one who might be able to retie those threads, to reweave the tear in the tapestry of their community. They sent runners to Peter the apostle, who had just performed a miracle. And they thought maybe . . . possibly . . . But you notice they didn't ask for anything in particular—just that he come, quickly. It wasn't like that father who hoped Jesus could get there before his little girl died. No, Tabitha was dead. They washed her and laid her out in the upper room. They just wanted Peter to come.*

Theological Reflection:

Yes, when something challenging happens in our life, we all search for support and someone to lean on.

If we consider that someone is essential to our lives, we pray and put our time and energy into it.

Christians don't just give up on hope when the reality of life hits without mercy!

A true believer, a person of faith – in this case, a community of faith – believes with a strong and vibrant faith that hope remains alive even amid lost causes!

The church in Joppa valued the strong threads and connection with Tabita and the community. Not only Peter, but we, can say that the whole community says, “Get up!”

“The best sons.”

This principle reminds me of one of the most inspiring narratives I learned from my cultural background.

You probably recall that we had the 5th of May, Cinco de Mayo, celebration last week.

On May 5, 1862, a battle was fought in my country of origin at Puebla, Mexico.

The battle was between the Army of the liberal government headed by President Benito Juarez and the French forces sent by Napoleon III to establish a French satellite state in Mexico.

The battle, which ended in a Mexican victory, is celebrated on the national calendar of Mexican holidays as “Cinco de Mayo” (5th of May).

There are many stories about this important event. One of them is General Zaragoza's speech given to the Mexican Army.

The General understood that the Mexican Army was smaller and had less military training.

Yet they were facing what was, at the time, the most powerful Army in the world – the French Army.

Facing the troops, Mexican General Zaragoza delivered one of the most inspiring speeches before that battle that I have known:

“In front of us, we have the most powerful army in the world, but you are the bravest and best sons of our country, our land.”

As we all know, that day, the limited but brave Army of Mexico won a legendary victory, defeating France and containing the European invasion of the American continent.

Look who you are in God’s sight and Get up!

Application:

I’ll connect the Bible Narrative of the church in Joppa and this illustration with one simple but powerful application.

Value yourself and value others:

The Bible passage today in Acts reminds us that it is crucial to understand and live out those strong threads of faith that connect us all.

It is essential to keep in our minds and hearts that we belong to a universal community of faith where all people are valuable.

Today, motherhood reminds me that I am who I am because of my ancestors.

I am who I am because of threads of my family legacy – with all the bad and all the good.

My mom passed away in 2020, but today, I can hear my her in the darkest moments of my life saying, “Get up!”

This powerful principle has also been expressed through my spiritual family.

During the most challenging moments of my life, the church that has raised and nurtured me has said, “Get up!”

In the same way, Dorcas experienced a miracle because of the faith of her community.

Her church never gave up on her!

The same way I have experienced the support of my family and my faith community saying, "Get up!"

Let's remember: Peter was the one who prayed, but the community was spiritually and emotionally connected with Tabita!

Today is a golden opportunity to reflect and express our appreciation for the people that serve, give, and with a great heart, make our life better!

It is crucial to value the threads that bind us together. Happy Mother's Day!

Today it is also crucial to acknowledge how God sees people – us – and what God thinks of us!

When the challenges of life come to us, and the battles are so overwhelmingly against us, we are called by God to listen like a mother:

You are the best son, the best daughter, you are valuable!

But at the same time, God is inviting us to see all people as valuable, important, worthy of love, respect, and dignity!

Amen!

