

# Trinity 14, 2017

## You Are a Superhero

Galatians 5:16-24

St. Andrew's Church – Jacksonville, Or

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*“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”*

Be honest...have you ever dreamed of being a Super-Hero? If you could be the superhero of your choice, who would it be. You could be Wonder women with her golden lasso, Superman with flying abilities, (Batman has a cool car), Batgirl with a mind of steal or Aquaman who can swim for miles under water. Maybe Captain Marvel would be a good choice having so many good qualities, The wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the courage of Achilles and the speed of Mercury. Yes, Captain Marvel seems to have it all. So many good examples of what mankind sees as role models. My Superhero choice...Superman! I have all the Christopher Reeves movies and still love them to this day. When he takes off his glasses and that hat, you know that the righting of wrongs is about to take place! He finds a private location (a phone booth is preferred), removes his outer garments and what is exposed is a man who can do incredible things in the name of a higher calling. But, really, in their own way, that's what all superheroes do isn't it. They shed their outer appearance to become what they truly are on the inside. No one really recognizes them from their outer appearance, although some sheds of light are exposed to those closest and most dear. While the heart of a superhero remains manifest in their worldly personifications, on the inside they are continually ready to fight the good fight, to save and protect the weak, to speak with authority the righteousness of God's moral law.

Paul's letter to the Galatians has a call out in today's reading for each of us to become a superhero. *“This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.”* Daily we walk in the dust of sin as we make our ways in life. We may do our best to do right by our brethren in the world, but the sin that

pervades mankind continues to soil our outer garments. The flesh is a burden that holds us down and keeps us back. Even Superman had to be willing to remove his layer of rags in order to fly...you never saw Superman fly in suit did you. It is by the sins of our flesh that we lack trust in our own abilities to share Jesus with others. It is by the weight of our sins that we judge ourselves unable to carry out God's call to spread the Gospel. It is by the sin of our flesh that the truth found in Jesus Christ is covered up. Idolatry, hatred, strife, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness...all of these are fleshly coverings keeping humanity from their righteous heritage in Jesus Christ.

Is it safer to hide behind the glasses? Do we feel inconspicuous if we keep our hats on? Are our earthly garments, manifested in the flesh, easier to walk in because we are more acceptable to the world? Are you afraid to let the suit go and leap the tallest buildings? If you are led by the spirit, if you are answering the call, if you are in the body of Christ...the releasing of the flesh is a battle that we must overcome. But the battle is not ours alone! It is He who is in us that emerges and ignites the superhero in each of us. That, which beforehand was impossible, is now exciting! Once you fly for the first time you will never want to put those glasses back on. Being a superhero for the gospel is a choice for Christ and a witness to the fruits of the spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness...faith. Once we release ourselves from the fear of worldly judgment we become the fruit of the spirit able to plant seeds and standby while God brings in the harvest. Many times I have seen Clark Kent desperately trying to get to a safe location where he could act on the superhero within. I tell you the truth...THE WORLD IS YOUR PHONEBOOTH!

But not everyone likes superheroes. Sometimes standing in the gap to right wrongs, to enforce morality...even the spreading of love and kindness...can be painful or frightening. As I tried to prepare a homily for today my mind was blank. I often find myself waiting on the Lord to enlighten my direction. Such had been the case all week and by Thursday, as I left for work, I was beginning to wonder if I had missed something. But faith in the Lord is one of my superpowers. While I was at work a serious situation arose and the banks of this homily formed and the stream began to flow. The Lord showed me a superhero. In an act of complete selfless disregard, Cherrie, a co-worker, was called into

action and wasted no time removing her daily attire to become the reality that lied within. As a very intoxicated woman was trying to leave our store with her baby in hand, Cherrie jumped into action, making up her mind on the spot, that this woman was not leaving with that child in the car. After much screaming and swearing, this young woman put her child in the car seat. As she entered the car and fumbled with starting it, Cherri silently opened the back door, released the child from the seat (and danger) and stood back as the woman floored her vehicle, tires screaming as she erratically drove through our parking lot. It was only a few seconds when the woman realized the baby was missing. Returning at a high rate of speed, the woman stopped short of Cherrie and her own baby. She got out in a hurry, ran at Cherri who did not move and punched her in the side of her head. Holding the woman back, I gave Cherri a chance to release the child to another woman who took the baby to a safe location while we waited the arrival of the police.

Why am I telling this story? It is stories like these that get lost everyday as superheroes step into action. Sometimes we don't get the chance to evaluate all the potential outcomes or our own possible sacrifice. The world is dangerous and one never knows when their choice to step up as a child of God may come. It is often in darkness that the need arises when the gifts of the spirit are going to be needed for the protection of an innocent child or the edifying of the Kingdom of God. In the person of Jesus Christ our Father stepped up. Cherrie, in the moment of need...stepped up. The gospel may not always be spoken in words, but in action you are edifying the Almighty by allowing the superhero within to embrace the sinful inclinations of the world without. We must crucify the flesh to become what God has prepared for us to be. As sin and evil desires rage within, we must let them rage in vain. The power of God is within you, you need only take off the glasses to see this truth.

Come forward today to the Table of the Lord and consume that which gives strength to the superhero within you, whereby you may cling to the pronouncement of Jesus Christ, *"Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."* (Luke 17:19)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.