

# 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Cycle A

### Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

### August 28, 2011

## Becoming More

Once upon a time, a dandelion whispered to the nutrients in its soil: *"How would you like to become a dandelion? You need only allow yourself to be dissolved in the earth's water, and I will draw you up through my roots.*

*"Afterward you will be able to grow and flower and brighten the world."* The nutrients said: *"Okay!"*

The next morning, a rabbit hopped by and, feeling generous, said to the dandelion: *"How would you like to become a rabbit? You would have to let me chew you up and swallow you, and you would lose your pretty petals.*

*"It would hurt at first, but afterward you would be able to hop around and wiggle your ears."* Not being rooted in just one place sounded good, so the dandelion allowed itself to be munched and it became a rabbit.

The next day, a hunter spotted the rabbit, and being in a friendly mood, asked: *"How would you like to become a human? Of course, you must let yourself be shot, skinned, stewed and eaten.*

*"That would be rather painful, but think of what you'd gain. You'd be able to think, laugh, cry, get 50 credit cards and watch football on a wide flat-screen TV."*

The rabbit was scared, but who could pass this up? So, he gave up the carefree life of a rabbit and became a human.

Years later, God noticed this human going about everyday human living. Feeling very fatherly, God said: *"Hey! How would you like to become a super-human?"*

## Becoming Divine

That, my friends, is the question God asks each human being.

And, in case we don't know what is involved in this, God's Son, Jesus, spells it out: *"You have to lose your life to find it."* Sports coaches and athletes say: *"No pain; no gain."*

Psychologists say: *"Lose your false self to find your true self."* Spiritual writers talk about the *"dark night before the dawn."*

What is it that we must lose and what do we gain? Well, the good news is that we don't lose anything essential to our humanity.

We don't lose anything that is good within us. All we really lose is our inhumanity, our bad self.

### What Do We Lose?

For example, we must lose our self-centeredness, which isolates us from other good people. We must lose our prejudices, which blind us to the truth.

We must lose our lust, which distorts our love. We must lose our insecurity, which restrains us from doing what we believe is right.

We must lose our obsession with money, which prevents us from being generous. And we must lose our fear, which strangles our hope.

### What Do We Gain?

To the degree that we do this losing, we gain. We actually enlarge or expand our humanity.

We don't have to get there all at once. We can do it step by step.

And we don't have to advance in every department of life. Actually, most saints are imperfect and unfinished in some way.

The best part is that in fulfilling our humanity, we simultaneously become divine. We participate in divine life.

We become intimate with God and start thinking and loving in a Godly way. We engage in communion and conversation with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And here is the really best part. In losing our lives in God, we don't really lose at all – like the nutrients in the soil or the dandelion or the rabbit.

Instead, we retain our own self and grow bigger. But we have to remember: only with God and only in going through this process of losing can we gain and be our fullest self.