

32nd Year

If Fr. Sean ever had any doubts about the Resurrection, (and I doubt that he ever doubted) he's certainly a believer now. Many of us heard his story last week of an 8 year old little leaguer whose first team was the Cubs and who since that day has had his heart broken many times, but has held on to hope that the Curse would be broken. And yes, my friends, the "curse" was broken for Fr Sean's beloved Cubs and even better? It was the 7th game of the World Series! 7 is the biblical number for perfection! And this was perfection! (Unless you are a Cleveland fan).

If this were Sesame Street the featured number today would be 7. We hear about the woman with 7 sons in the reading from Maccabees and the woman with 7 husbands in the Gospel. But before we think about these scriptures, let's think about 7's. As you know numbers have special significance in the Bible. Like the number 40. It means "a long time". But 7 seems to have been from the beginning of time a special number. God creates the world in 7 days. There is a sense of completion. The seventh day is the Sabbath, the day of rest. The Book of Revelations has 7 churches. The Church has seven sacraments. (Other examples of 7?) 7 petitions in the Our Father. (the number 7 appears more than 700 times in the Bible)

But you may ask "What's so perfect about 7 in the scriptures today?" The mother of 7 sons loses all of them. The woman in the Gospel loses 7 husbands. What's so perfect about that? And interestingly enough, the woman in the gospel who has had seven husbands doesn't count for anything. The Sadducees don't care about her grief, her loss. Of course, women in this society didn't count for anything. Knowing Jesus' concern for women in his ministry, it is surprising that he

does not call the Sadducees on this. For whatever reason, he doesn't or at least the gospel writer doesn't mention how dehumanizing this scenario is.

On first glance the number 7 does seem to be arbitrary. The mother could have had 5 or 8 sons. The woman could have had 6 or 9 husbands? But there is something about 7. OK. I know this is a stretch like the 7th inning stretch. The scripture writer is using 7 to say something about the perfect faithfulness of the woman and her sons. They are so faithful to the law that they will even give up their lives. And the Gospel? The 7, related to the 7 days of creation leads us to reflect on God's faithfulness to Jesus and to God's creation. We know that nothing is "perfect" in life but God is so faithful to the creation that God promises to fulfill creation in the Resurrection. And that is what we believe God does for Jesus in the Resurrection. God shows himself as God of the Living. Life can be beautiful but it is flawed. God wants us to experience the fullness of life, the perfection of life. That is the promise that God holds in store for us. And so much longer than the Cubs had to wait to win the World Series.

Speaking of the Cubs victory, after hearing Fr, Sean's passionate homily last week, I had the feeling that they were going to win after all. I jokingly told him that if they did, it was because of the faithfulness of an 8 year old boy, who has been holding onto hope for quite a few years. Of course I was only joking. Or was I?