

## **Romans 8:35-39 – Homily**

I'm sure you've all heard that the latest Superhero movie, *Captain America*, is now out in theatres. This movie has certainly continued the current Hollywood trend of putting out movies based on comic book superheroes.

First there were the Superman movies, I have no idea how many Batman movies there have been, but there are three Spiderman movies, then there was also the *Incredibles*, *The Fantastic Four*, *Green Lantern* as well as *The Green Hornet*, which got pretty bad reviews, but I thought was hilarious.

Why have these movies been so popular? Well, for one thing, we love our superheroes, don't we? We love the way they leap tall buildings in a single bound. We love the way they get themselves out of the most dangerous situations. We love them because they are able to do things that regular people can't do.

We love them because, you and I, we don't always save the day. We live in a world where good does not always triumph over evil. We live in a real world, a world which is far different from a movie. And life in the real world is sometimes hard. Life in the real world isn't always fair, and we don't always get what we want.

Let's face it, we are not superheroes, but we certainly share a number of things with them.

Every superhero has a super-nemesis. Batman has the Joker, Superman, Lex Luther.... We have... ourselves. Oh, sure, at the root of it all is Satan, but he works best when he gets us to work against ourselves.

When we allow our hurts, our fears to get the better of us, we take a few steps back in our battle. But discouragement, doubt, despair, those are kryptonite to us, and the devil knows it.

Planting those seeds in us is easy stuff. We're not good enough, smart enough, good-looking enough. Our sins are too great, our lusts too strong, our greed too rampant. How could God love someone like me? When these thoughts take hold of us... we can be defeated.

Today's readings are some of the most poignant in all of scripture. The Church gives them to us today in one big chunk. But our second reading, for my money, is the most powerful.

### **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ”**

Paul could have answered with a simple, clear and emphatic, “NO ONE,” but he didn't. Instead he modified the question, making the hypothetical much more personal: **“Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword” ?**

Paul lists here dangers that believers have to deal with... Real dangers to our souls..... real dangers to our eternal life.

Paul implies with this line of questioning that these things are going to be present in the lives of believers. In fact, he assumes they will. Maybe not all of them at the same time, maybe not all to the same degree, but if you are a believer, Paul writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit knows that we will all have to deal with these things.

So will we be able to handle them? Could trouble, hardship, persecution, make it difficult at times to remain a person of faith? Could they potentially separate you from the love of Christ? The surprising answer is actually ... YES. But it is only a one-way yes. God is unchanging, unwavering in His love for us. But us, no, we change, we waffle.

What does Paul want us to know? What comfort do these words give? Paul wants us to know that there is no creature, no dimension, no person, no power, no sin and no problem, absolutely nothing in all of creation that can change the amazing love God has for us?

(PAUSE)

Superman has his red cape. Spiderman has his web. Batman sports a yellow utility belt. What do we have?

What is our trademark?

It is the indelible mark of our baptism. Through this Sacrament, we became children of our Heavenly Father, and no one invests more in child-care than he does!

Isaiah says today to Come drink, come eat, come and feast without money or cost. Be lavished in the graces that flow from our Savior's merciful heart. Baptism is a source of immeasurable grace.

What is our super-weapon?

- We have a utility belt that puts Batman to shame.
- Thor has a hammer, we have the sword of the Word of God proclaimed here today and available to us at all times.
- Wonder-Woman has the Lasso of Truth; we have the Fullness of the truth in the Catholic Church.
- We have the Sacraments that show us our true selves, as God sees us. Especially powerful here is Reconciliation.

Green Lantern has to re-charge his ring. What is our strength? It is the very flesh and blood of Jesus, the Bread broken for us that is fore shadowed in today's Gospel and made a reality here on this altar.

Dear friends, we may not possess any super-human abilities. We may not have superhuman strength, but what we have is super-natural something that transcends our damaged nature and conforms us to Christ himself.

We don't need to be super-heroes. We don't even need to be super-Christians. We just need to humble ourselves before God, accept that we will mess up, seek His forgiveness and accept that He loves us, even when we feel unlovable.

Remember that in all things, through and in Christ, we are more than super-heroes; we are more than conquerors; we are indeed, **super-conquerors**.