22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

I would like to use a scientific concept as an analogy.

We all have heard of the big bang theory of the beginning of creation. You probably have seen picture interpretations of the event. It is like a large explosion with a huge burst of light.

Scientists have interpreted this event as the beginning of matter and antimatter. What happens is that when these two things meet there is a release of energy, powerful energy, that is painted as a very great release of photons or a burst of light. The matter and antimatter cancel each other out with a bang.

Why we have something left over is that there probably was more matter than antimatter. After the explosion, there was enough matter to start a universe. There is still antimatter corresponding to the left over matter but no one knows where it is.

This is all very confusing and incomprehensible unless I tell you that I am going to have a PET scan (Positron Emission Tomography). Then you would say “A ha”, I heard of this test. In a PET scan some antimatter is introduced into your body, a positron, and when it meets the electrons in your body, they cancel each other out and you have gamma rays emitted and recorded and then you see a colorful picture of these gamma rays on the screen.

Using that as a background, I would like to propose that energy (or God) is good energy. What if there is anti-energy or bad energy? This anti-energy or bad energy is what I call evil.

We all know that the personification of evil is Satan. He battles against all that is good. He tempts. He schemes. He appears as a guest in many –a- movie. He is not as strong as God. Satan cannot win. (As an aside, angels are pure energy allowed by God to exist. Angels interact with nature and mankind for good if they are good angels or evil if they are bad angels.) Their energy, if we let it, can be more powerful than man’s (yet God loves us more than angels.) They can use their energy to influence us to do good or to do evil. Only if we let them.

Evil is a powerful force. How do we allow evil to influence us? We are influenced by its energy. If we fall into the temptation to use it, we sin. We can harm ourselves and others by allowing evil to reign in our hearts. So we sin. We do wrong. But again, this evil energy is not as strong as God or the good within ourselves. We can overcome evil and its temptations. If we are weak and our good energy is low we have to re-energize ourselves with the good. We interact with our God through prayer. We associate ourselves with good people and combine our energy with theirs. That is why we have a church community called a parish. And here at BMT we have the Blue Teams that energize each other by doing good things in and for the parish and the larger community. We also have the sacraments that visibly identify the closeness we can have with our God. Just look at the Eucharist. We participate in the energy of Jesus Christ by absorbing his holy Word and receiving his Holy Communion.

A word about sickness. Is it evil? No. Nature is nature. For some of us, all of us, sometimes nature takes what we would call a left turn in our bodies. But nature is nature and does what it will. We can corral its energy by taking an aspirin or maybe chemo. Why do we pray when we are sick? We pray to ask God for the energy to accept our condition and help us find the way to work through or around nature’s energy. We ask health professionals to energize our bodies. We ask our family and friends to pray for us to add their energy to ours. We ask for the sacrament of the sick. The words used in the sacrament are:

Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.

The grace of the Holy Spirit is his energy. Sin is any weakness, because of a loss of energy, to give up on God with his loving mercy.

Bottom line is that sickness is not morally bad. It just is. We have to deal with it. It is not a curse from God. God doesn’t do bad things to good people. The energy we ask for is not to be well but to cope and not give in. If our energy is strong enough we can weather the storm. Disease cannot kill us even if we die. We are the immortal ones loved to life eternally by our God.

Anti-energy is no match for our energy if we are energized by our God.