

## Homily 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year C 2022

John was a sick child with a rare and serious illness. The doctors said he would not live long, but were unsure how long it would be. John spent many days in hospital when, one day, a clown saw how sad John was and came over to him:

"Why are you standing there like that? Haven't they told you about the Heaven for sick children?"

John shook his head.

"Well, it's the best place you could ever imagine, much better than heaven for parents or anyone else. They say it's like that to compensate children who were sick. But to enter, there is one condition."

John: "What's that?"

"You cannot die without having filled the bag."

"The bag?"

"Yes, yes. A large grey bag like this one," which the Clown pulled out from his jacket.

"You were lucky I had one on me. You have to fill it with notes so you can buy your ticket."

"Notes? That's no good, I haven't any money."

"No, not ordinary notes. Special notes describing all the good things you do. At night an angel comes and checks the paperwork, and exchanges them with tickets to heaven."

"Really?"

"Of course! But be sure to hurry up and fill your bag. You've been sick a long time and you may not have enough time left to fill the bag. This is a unique opportunity and it would be a terrible shame if you died before completing it!" The clown left in a hurry.

What he had been told seemed wonderful, so John thought he had nothing to lose by trying. When his mother visited him, he gave her the best of smiles, and made an effort to be more cheerful than usual, knowing this would make her happy. He wrote on a piece of paper: "Mum smiled today" and put it in the bag.

Next morning, John ran to the bag. And there it was! A real ticket to heaven! The ticket looked so magical and wonderful it filled John with excitement. He then spent the rest of that day doing everything to cheer up the doctors and nurses, and he was company to the children who felt most lonely. He even told jokes to his little brother and took some books to study. And for every one of them he put a piece of paper in his bag.

So it continued, every day John woke up excited, counting his new tickets to heaven, and working on gaining many more. Every night the angel arranged them in the tidiest way, taking up the least space so John was forced to continue doing good works at top speed, hoping to fill the bag before becoming too sick ...

However hard he tried John never filled the bag but he had become the most beloved child in the hospital, doing so in the most cheerful and helpful way. And this ended up completely healing him. Nobody knew how it happened: some said his joy and attitude must have cured him, others were convinced that the hospital staff loved him so much that they spent extra hours trying to find a cure and provide the best care, and some said a couple of elderly millionaires who John had cheered up during their illness had paid for him to have expensive experimental treatment.

All this was true because, as the clown had seen many times before. You only have to put a bit of heaven in your old grey bag each night to transform what seems like a dying existence into the very best days of your life.

**Why did the clown go to the doctor?** Because he was feeling funny!

**What do you call a drawing of a clown?** A comedy sketch!

**What does a clown call an OXO cube.** A laughing stock

**How big is a clown's computer hard drive. A 1000 gigglebites**