

## Christmas Homily 2025

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to see Rick Springfield in concert. It was an amazing show. In light of our celebration of Christmas, the one song that comes to mind is “Human Touch.” It is about the need for authentic human connection and intimacy in a world increasingly dominated by all forms of technology. In a society in which people are feeling scared and isolated, Rick Springfield proclaims: “We all need the human touch. We all need it. I need it to. Human touch.”

Christmas is a revelation that as human beings, composed of body and soul, we are in need of the human touch of God. St. Augustine reminds us of our daily and ongoing need through these following pearls of spiritual wisdom: “Our hearts were made for You O’ Lord. And our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” The human touch of God comes to us in and through the person of Jesus Christ who is simultaneously 100 percent human and 100 percent God. Therefore, the touch of Jesus is always human

and divine. As we travel the journey of life and faith, Jesus did not want us to feel scared and isolated from God, especially as we endure our crosses and losses. Therefore, God came to live among us in the person of Jesus to reveal the full depth of His love and mercy for us, individually and as a collective humanity.

Jesus offers us His human touch by revealing the heart of God. He reveals that we and every person are a beloved daughter and son of God. We possess an earthly and eternal dignity. We are all God's favorites, and we personally experience this awesome reality to the degree that we fully surrender ourselves and our lives to Him. This Good News anchors our personal identity in a modern world that is losing its awareness of the importance of human connection and intimacy.

Jesus offers us His human touch by revealing the mind of God. He reveals what is necessary for us to be united with Him, and to grow in Him, both in life and in death. He does so through: the Sacred Scriptures, especially the four Gospels; the teachings of our Catholic Christian faith; and the sanctifying power and

inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He does this not to limit our freedom, but to maximize it. His truth sets us free inwardly and allows us to experience the glorious freedom of the children of God. We are gradually liberated from the blinding and enslaving power of sin, self-centeredness, and addiction. The mind of God is always geared toward our earthly and eternal happiness.

Jesus offers us His human touch by personally identifying with us. Since he fully shared in our humanity in all things but sin, Jesus understands the human heart and the human experience from the inside out. He totally gets us. He understands the wide range of positive and negative experiences that make up our human experience whether that be family life, relationships, work, nature, or treasured life experiences. He equally understands the reality of temptation, inconvenience and discomfort, frustration and boredom, struggle and suffering, rejection and betrayal, loneliness and grief, loss and the unescapable reality of physical death. May the human touch that He can truly identify with us inspire us to

seek His divine touch in every aspect of our lives. His human touch is always the avenue to His divine touch. His human touch is the doorway to the divine healing of our spiritual hearts.

Jesus offers His human touch to bring about our eternal salvation. The name Jesus means “God saves.” At the time of Jesus, names revealed the life mission of the person. God came among us in the person of Jesus, first and foremost, “to save us from our sins.” Instead of punishing us for our sins, God took all that punishment on Himself, through Jesus’s sacrificial death on the cross. He came among us as the spotless and unblemished Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. He was the perfect sin offering and atonement for all of sins: past, present, and future. Since His main mission was to “save us from our sins,” may we take our sin seriously. May we be honest with ourselves and Jesus about our ongoing need for the personal touch of our Savior, while seeking out and trusting in, His abundant mercy. The human touch of Jesus does not end there. Through His bodily death on the cross and His bodily

resurrection from the tomb, Jesus brought about victory over sin and death. He won for us unity and intimacy with God in this life and for all eternity, if only we keep humbly choosing to embrace this gift given to us out of sacrificial love.

Switching gears, do you realize that Jesus needs our human touch? We touch His Sacred Heart and the hem of His garment every time we are mindful of Him, seek to draw closer to Him, persevere in doing His will, and strive to do everything out of love for Him. These types of actions and disposition of heart make His heart swell with immense joy and comfort. It calls down upon us the lavish grace and mercy of our Savior.

Jesus offers us His human touch every time we pray or worship in a spontaneous or structured fashion. In those moments, He spiritually provides us with a warm and loving embrace, allows us to lay our heads on His heart, and He lays His hands on ours. The most intimate touch of Jesus comes through Eucharistic communion in which we take him into our bodies and souls. As we keep coming to receive His touch with

humble and contrite hearts our minds are renewed and illuminated, our hearts are healed and expanded, and our souls are cleansed and transformed. His touch is our place of identity confirmation, personal communion, inner healing, personal conversion, and salvation.

Jesus likes to extend His human touch outside the context of prayer and worship. One of the more common ways we experience His personal touch is through other people. I recently had the opportunity to watch the movie called “The Green Mile.” There was one character known as John Coffey. When introducing himself, since his last name was Coffey, he would say with a sparkle in his eye and a smile on his face, “like the drink but spelled different.” He was a huge mountain of a man, pure muscle, but possessed a childlike mind and heart. Through the gift of physical touch, he could heal people of bodily illness and reveal to themselves and others the disposition of their hearts. In his own humble but miraculous manner, he was a source of healing and inspiration for the guards and prisoners on death row.

Like John Coffey, we are called to be channels and vessels of the healing and loving touch of Jesus. We can do so through a warm and caring hug or handshake, words of encouragement and hope, deeds of thoughtfulness and charity, the sharing of our personal and spiritual gifts, and an inspiring and faithful Catholic Christian witness. There is a catch, however. We are called to not only “be” the human touch of Jesus, but recipients of His touch from other people. Depending on the circumstances, it is possible that in refusing it from others, we are rejecting the touch of Jesus Himself. Giving and receiving the human touch of Jesus is meant to be a two-way street. As Rick Springfield so prophetically sings: “We all need the human touch. We all need it. And I need it to. Human touch.” And the human touch we need above all others, is the touch of Jesus. His touch is truly divine. His touch is truly salvific.

Merry Christmas!!!

