

In Desert Survival School, part of the training is being able to find your way around outdoors. One of the methods we were taught was to pace out a certain distance, and figure out how many paces it would take to get there.

So, 1800 paces is about a mile. Keep 18 little rocks in your hand, and count 100 steps ... drop a rock every 100 steps ... after you're hand is empty, you've walked a mile.

Another part of the training is sleep deprivation. That is, you're always on the go for that week.

And so, it was probably two in the morning, I'm leading my squadron across the High Desert about an hour outside of San Diego ... it's dark, I'm not paying too much attention ... and ploink ... I drop all of the rocks.

I don't know if it would have been different if it was daylight – I mean a rock is a rock and a pebble is a pebble. And the desert is FULL of little rocks. But that night, it was pitch black outside.

So, I bend down, pick up a small handful of rocks, and keep walking.

And the squadron keeps following me.

Walk, drop, walk, drop ... and I'm out of rocks, and we're in the middle of a stream bed in the middle of the desert in the middle of the night.

So, what's a highly trained Naval Aviator supposed to do?

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ...”

Don't laugh! I started praying, and kept walking.

And my squadron, figuring that I had this ALL figured out ... well, they keep following.

All of a sudden, we're in the woods. And I'm all out of rocks and all out of Hail Mary's ... and one of the training instructors pops out of the woods and say “Good job guys. This is exactly where you belong.”

And everybody starts congratulating me on being the best tracker in the whole program.

In the first reading, St. Paul tells us that Jesus is HEAD of his body THE CHURCH.

The early Church Fathers talked about Jesus as the NEW HEAD of a redeemed HUMANITY. They even had a word for it – RECAPITULATION.

But on a more normal level, have you ever been told “GET YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT!” or have you been asked “WHERE IS YOUR HEAD?”

That's not all that wrong. If Jesus isn't your HEAD, then maybe you DON'T have your head on straight. Or maybe even you've already lost your head.

But not to worry. Jesus is there to hook you up with a new head.

Today is First Friday – Dedicated to the Sacred Heart ... and here we are, in Sacred Heart Church ... with the Sacred Heart Academy football team ... getting ready for another game.

And I've got an offer for you.

Jesus not only wants to give you a new head, but also wants to give you a new heart.

I'm not sure how much you're going to remember ... but I want you to remember two short prayers to the Sacred Heart. The first one is: "Jesus, meek and humble of hearts, make my heart like unto Thine."

In other words, "Jesus, give me a heart like yours."

I want you to pray that prayer when you're listening to your coach, or your parents, or your teachers.

And when you're out on the field and all heck is breaking loose, or you're in the classroom taking a hard test, or on the weekend and you find yourself someplace you probably shouldn't be, pray "Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me."

Because on this day dedicated to the Sacred Heart, we should stand back and ask ourselves "Where's my heart?" and "Is my heart in the right place?"

And if it's not ... ask Jesus to fix it. You've got the two prayers, use them.

Where is your heart? Where is your head?

Get your head on straight. And get your heart in the right place.

"Jesus, meek and humble of hearts, make my heart like unto Thine."

"Most Sacred Heart of Jesus: have mercy on us."