

B 21st Ordinary Sunday Aug 24 25 2024

My sisters and brothers in Christ. This weekend wraps up our five-week reading of the Bread of Life discourse in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. Fr. James has asked you every week to please take the time to read this chapter, and I'm going to ask you to do so as well. And if you have read it, thank you and if you haven't, please do, it doesn't take that long and hopefully it will have more meaning for you now that we have spent so much time preaching on it.

For the last four weeks, we have heard Jesus trying to persuade the crowd that he has the words of everlasting life and that by eating his body and blood they can have everlasting life.

This week it is decision time. Are you in or out? For many of his disciples, they are out. They quit and return to their old way of life because "This saying is difficult."

Except for Peter.

Keep in mind that Peter isn't very far along in his spiritual journey. Peter's understanding of God and Jesus and the relationship between the two is probably unclear and a bit vague at this point in his life. He has yet to experience the death and resurrection of Jesus, his ascension into heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the upper room. He is still a long, long way from those powerful speeches in Acts of the Apostles that we hear post-Easter.

Still, he is all in. And did you notice that Peter asked, "to whom" and not "to where" should we go? Peter could have joined the other disciples and gone back to his old job, his home, his family, but he doesn't.

Why not? Peter is searching for something, longing for something that he can't probably even articulate if he was asked. He just knows that he was searching and then he found Jesus who has the words of eternal life. To whom else would he want to go? Jesus is the great treasure found in the field, or the pearl of great price that once found, a person would give up everything to obtain it. Jesus is the person who can lead Peter to God and to eternal life.

How did Peter come to this decision? By watching Jesus, listening to him, following him, seeing what he does and how he acts in other people's lives. He heals, He teaches, He admonishes, and brings peace, joy, and love.

So, Peter cannot, will not, go back to his former way of life. Why? "To whom shall we go? We have come to believe that you are the Holy one of God." His old life is like the old wine skin that would burst if this new wine was poured into it. Unlike those other disciples who went back to their old way of life and abandoned Jesus, Peter has witnessed enough trusts Jesus enough that he realizes that he can't go back to his old way of life.

The good news is that this isn't something that happened to Peter and a few disciples 2,000 years ago. No, Christ is present here and now in His living Word, the Eucharist, and this community gathered here now. What Jesus is offering to each of us is a personal intimate relationship with him that will lead us into the very life of God and nourish us in this life here and now. It will bring us to dwell in Jesus and to have Jesus dwell within us. We are fed now, today and everyday by his word and his body and blood.

And like Jesus transformed Peter's life, some of us here today have also seen enough, heard enough, perhaps even have experienced Christ's healing touch so that we too can trust in him enough, to begin to let him transform our lives as well.

What does that transformed life look like? It is what Paul is talking about when he writes to the Galatians: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me." Gal. 2:19-20

This is the kind of life that enabled Peter to make such a bold proclamation in Acts of the Apostles – the speech after the descent of the Spirit and the cure of the crippled beggar.

Maybe you are not quite there yet to invite Jesus into your life, or you have questions that need answering, or you have been baptized, but lack your first communion and confirmation. Classes will be starting soon for the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults OCIA – it used to be called RCIA – will be starting soon. Talk to me, after mass or send me an email if you want further information.

As Jesus said to John and Andrew when they asked him where he was staying "Come and see". Amen