

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 23, 2015

**“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”**

*Living as a Person of God*

“How are you?” This is a question we probably hear every day as a form of polite conversation. Most people answer “Fine,” or “Good,” or “Great.” Occasionally, someone will give a lengthy answer that usually involves health problems. However, I would like to ask you to think for a moment about this question. How ARE you?

Are you a person of God? This was probably an easier question to answer a month or so ago before we began this series. If you have been following along the last 4 weeks, like me, probably you have been doing a lot of thinking about the way you live your life, and how you can be a person of God.

So, now the question becomes more than rhetorical. How DO we live as a person of God? Over the past 4 weeks, as I said, we have looked at various aspects of this, and in the end it boils down to the quote we just heard from today’s Gospel. Jesus’ words are those of eternal life. It is through the words of Jesus that we properly form our consciences and act virtuously instead of viciously. It is through the words of Jesus that we learn to love fully and properly, with *Agape, Philia and Pragma*; which are unselfish love, friendship love and long-term love. It is through the words of Jesus that we find true justice. It is also by following not only the words, but also the

example, of Jesus... the Holy One of God... that we can truly see exactly what it means to be a person of God.

To be a person of God means that we have to constantly die to our very selves... each and every single day. Jesus trained for this with His 40-Day fast in the desert where He was tempted by Satan. He lived this in the way that He taught... even when He wanted a day off with His friends and people followed them. He still taught them. He did this with the way that He treated everyone He met. Think of the woman caught in adultery, which is in Chapter 8 of John's Gospel. Jesus shows us the ways in which we are to act if we are to live as a person of God.

However, it is not just through actions that we live as people of God. The actions reflect what should be our interior disposition. We, like Jesus, need to have an intimate relationship with our Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit. We need to get to know them so well that we know them like a parent, sibling or spouse. The question is, how do we do this?

In our passage from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians today, we hear about the proper disposition of spouses toward each other. If we take the whole passage in context, we can see that this paradigm is also the model for Christ and His relationship with His Church... commonly referred to as the Bride of Christ. We are in the role of the wife, who is loved completely and unconditionally by the husband, who is also to cherish and protect her. The wife is to love unconditionally the husband and trust that love.

So, the answer as to how to love God in all three persons is surprisingly simple. It is to spend time with each person of the Trinity in prayer and in the Sacraments. Many of us have been taught that attendance at Mass once/week is our obligation. However, it is not nearly enough if we REALLY want to get to know Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit through prayer. For example, technically speaking the human body can go 21 days without food and survive, so the minimum amount of times that a human being has to eat is once every 3 weeks. Is this healthy? I would dare say no. Most people eat 2-3 times each day, sometimes more if snacks are counted in. The same is true with the Sacraments, especially the Mass. If we only do the bare minimum, we may be SURVIVING spiritually, but we are not THRIVING spiritually. Just like we need food to keep us going each day, we need the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as much as possible to keep us going. The Eucharist is Christ... the Bread of LIFE!

Not only that, but at Mass we are fed with the Sacrament of the Word of God. When we hear Scripture, it is LITERALLY God speaking to us. Going back to the husband/wife metaphor, if we only spoke to our spouse once per week, how healthy would that relationship be? Indeed, if we wish to get closer to Christ, we should be WANTING to hear Him speak to us each and every day. Also, if we can't make it on a particular day, we should feel the loss.

Now, this is not meant to make anyone feel guilty. It is merely the way that we are set up. We are pre-wired with a need for connection with God. It was lost for

humanity when sin entered the world, but we still have a need for it. The only thing is that it now takes affirmative action on our part to make it happen. Since we humans lost it through sin, we have to overcome our own temptations and hook in to that connection that God set out for us in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Jesus ushered in a New Covenant. God is keeping His part of the covenant, but we have to keep our part too by actively seeking Him out, developing it and renewing our relationship with Him each and every day.

Now, it can be said that one doesn't have to go to Church to talk to God. That is true. However, it is only by going to Church that one can receive the Sacraments which are so vital and such a help to us both spiritually and bodily. Also, we need to spread the word that that emptiness that most of the world feels can be filled right here... in the Sacraments.

Although to those of us in the Catholic tradition evangelization is a scary word, all it is, is introducing people to the only thing that can fill the emptiness that they feel inside... God in Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments. When one comes to the Word of God, the Eucharist, Reconciliation and so forth, and realizes the reality of it, it is mind-blowing. Hopefully, the awesomeness of this is coming back to you today. If it is, share that with family, friends... everyone you can. It is the best gift you can give.

So, in the end, our relationship with God comes in knowing His Son, Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. To live as a person of God, we need to know Him

intimately, listen and come to Him often... every day if possible... and by doing that, our actions will then become more and more like His. Our consciences will become better and better formed. We will love more and more as He loves. We will be more merciful in our justice. We will live as a person of God, and then you can say... truthfully and honestly... when someone asks you how you are, “God & Me are doing fine.”