

Sunday 29 November 2020

Good Morning All,

I trust you are all well.

What a privileged it is to day to be able to worship God in the beauty of His Holiness.

I cant believe today is the first Sunday of Advent.

Commitment

Reading John 6;48-70

One day a few years ago, I went to have a key cut. The storekeeper told me the following Story. A women came into his shop and asked for a key to be cut. After she paid for the new key she went home to try it out. She came back to the store four times, without successfully getting the new key to work. The fourth time the shop owner told that he was stumped, there was nothing more he could door. The women replied, O well, the original, master key doesn't open the door either."

Life is like that too. If we become disciples of false teachers we shall end up getting lost and travelling down dangerous, destructive roads and find we don't have the correct key to open the right door. However if we become disciples of Jesus, we will find we have correct key as He leads us out of lostness and down roads of righteousness, goodness and love.

In today's gospel reading we learn of how, after listening to Jesus' teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum many of disciples found His words difficult to understand to the extent that they no longer wanted to be His disciples. Jesus was teaching about the sacrament of Holy Communion, of eating and drinking of His flesh and Blood. To many this was going to far. How could they, being faithful Jews, participate in the most offensive act of cannibalism. Such teaching went beyond sound reasoning and common understanding. However, Jesus was not teaching or advocating that His disciples practice cannibalism. He was speaking of living in a relationship with Him as Gods Holy One, who would open the door to the Father with the correct key and will bring them in the Fathers kingdom.

As this gospel story unfolds the people, who were disciples, we are told were abandoning Jesus left, right and centre. He then asks the disciples if they also wish to leave Him. Peter speaking on behalf of the group says in verses 68 and 69 "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

One wonders, how Peter and the eleven remain with Jesus and make this confession, while on the other hand many others, who were His disciples abandon Him. The main

reason seems to be that the ones who left placed their own understanding, their own knowing over and above the faith of being able to trust in Jesus even if they did not completely understand His teachings.

So it was with Peter and the disciples as it is with us too, that faith and believing take precedent over and before knowledge and understanding. We do not know and understand in order to have faith and to believe. It is the other way round, we have faith and believe in order to know and understand. This comes from Peter's words, "We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." Belief comes first then the knowing. We see this truth as we read the story of Jesus and His disciples. We notice that it is not until **after** Christ's resurrection that the disciples really knew and understood what Jesus was talking about before He died. That he had predicted His death and Resurrection. So it with us too, we believe and have faith in Jesus long before we completely know and understand Him. Our knowledge and understanding of Him is always growing and maturing as we take practical steps of faith in our daily living.

The truth to which Peter's confession points us to is, **The importance of Commitment to Christ**. Here we have disciples giving up their commitment to Jesus. When the going gets tough we really can see who has a strong commitment and stays. Peter and the disciples stayed put in their commitment to Christ.

During the 1950s a matric class painted a mural on one of the walls of the cafeteria. Towards the end of the 1970s it was decided a more modern mural should be painted on the wall. So the wall was prepared. The students decided on the design, it was then drawn onto the wall. Some of the students started painting the design. Each of the students was allocated a part of the wall. The mural got partially painted. Some of the painters never picked up a brush. After looking at the half finished mural for a while, it was decided a plain wall would look better. The commitment was sadly missing and as a result of what could have been a beautiful wall, came to nothing.

By following Jesus and being committed to Him like Peter and His disciples we are able to make our life count. A commitment can change the ordinary to the extraordinary by investing time, talents, gifts and resources to work to the good of all. Had those students all been committed to finish the mural, what a wonderful legacy they would have left behind. When we are committed to Jesus, we can leave a beautiful legacy of faith, hope and love for others that have the potential of lasting not only a lifetime, but into all eternity. Peter's confession reminds us all that by being committed to Christ our lives can make a tremendous difference in the church and the world.

One of the central features of the language of a confession is that it is a language of love. Most of us who have fallen in love with someone often will say something like "She is the only one for me" or "he is the best man in the whole wide world." The love relationship we are involved in is so serious that there is no room for any other person. There is no other that can meet our needs as that person we love does.

So it was with Peter and the disciples, when he made his confession to Christ. Notice the words he uses to show their loyalty and love towards Jesus. “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. The statement here might be translated like this, “Jesus, you alone are the only one for us, there is no one in the whole wide world like you, you are the best, you are the greatest, you are number one”. Peter says “You have the words of eternal life.” Jesus is the The word become flesh living and dwelling among us. His flesh presents the word and His word gives life. His words are life giving because they are overflowing with promises. Promises like “ Your sins are forgiven, I am with you till the end of time, I love you, you are a precious member of my family, you are created in the very image of God, in me you are given everything you need to live an abundant life, I accept you unconditionally, I love you so much that I have suffered and died for you, I am the Holy One of God who through my resurrection have defeated the powers of sin, death and evil, and many more promises.

Peter and the disciples who heard Jesus' words realised that His words were life giving and full of promises. That is the reason why they could say, “Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God”.

We face many tests and hardships in life. At time we pray and pray but feels that God is not hearing us. At times we are tempted and turn away from Jesus and go and look for greener pastures. However our God does not reject us or punish us for all this, instead He hears and invites us back from our wonder lust. So we like the 12 are invited to stay with Him. He will give us so much more than we need to live life in abundance.

Amen