

Thoughts from the Rectory ...

Dear friends of St. John the Evangelist,

“We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God”. These words of St. Peter, heard in today’s Gospel, are a bold declaration and a profound realization of truth. They are a witness to the unfolding mystery of divine revelation and an appropriation of that mystery into the exercise of the Apostle’s will. “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”.

St. Peter, and we with him I pray, begins a journey, a process of coming to believe. As with any relationship, there is a time unknown, busy or idle with the things that simply occupy our days. For him, it was working on the sea, hauling his nets. For us, it may be our 9 to 5, our errands and to-do list, our Zoom meeting or studies. Then a first encounter that offers us a choice, “Come and follow me”. Perhaps we were introduced to Jesus already at a young age, in our schoolrooms or through our parents and grandparents. Perhaps we were introduced through a friend, in college, or in our dating and marriage. Perhaps a prayerful experience in an empty and quiet church. Perhaps a stimulating conversation or consideration of some words of Scripture. Each of us will have had that first encounter with the Lord.

As Jesus affirms “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world”, we are confronted with the choice to ever deepen our relationship with Him or to remain mere observers. We can be drawn into deeper faithfulness or simply acquainted from afar. “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the

flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you”.

Jesus challenges us. He rouses us from our fatigue and drudgery, and commands our attention. He asks us to go all-in, full board, without holding back. He places before us a clear choice ...

Each of us must respond to that choice with the fullness of our lives. We cannot only go in toe-deep, the shallow end of faith. Belief must become conviction.

Jesus’ claims are hard, but they are true. He is truly present to us, especially in the awe-inspiring mystery of the Eucharist, His flesh and blood. While St. Peter, the Apostles, and countless more over the centuries have responded to Jesus’ call with the very witness of their lives, many others remained timid and slight. Faced with the choice of authentic belief, that shakes and rocks us to the core, fickleness and flight can seem comforting. “As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him” (Jn. 6:66).

Let us not be the ones who are knocked off course, tempted to doubt and disbelief, fallen prey to the wiles of the Enemy. Let us be the ones who hear the words of the Lord our Saviour and rejoice in the mystery of His revelation. Let us be the ones bound to the Eucharist and inheritors of eternal life. Let us be the ones who have come to believe and are convinced that He is the Holy One of God!

St. John the Evangelist, pray for us!

Fr. Pierz