

5 Sunday Easter C 2016
Frazee/Callaway
April 24, 2016

Penitential Act

Announcements

We need your help to bring the Eucharist to the Care Center and to other people homebound.

Homily

Mary, our Mother, we give ourselves totally to you as your possession and property. Please make of us, of all that we are and have, whatever most pleases you. Let us be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for bringing the greatest possible glory to God. Amen

After Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the good news to that city (Debra) and made a considerable number of disciples...they returned to Lystra.

When I hear the word "disciple," I tend to think of it as a final achievement, as if to say, "I am an engineer," or "I am a doctor." *I am a disciple.* It is really not like this at all. To be a disciple is to be a student—a learner. The closest analogy to being a disciple is, "I am a student."

So, is being a disciple to be a student of religion or theology? A person can study religion purely out of curiosity. A person can study theology and have no faith at all.

When I was in canon law school one of my teachers was Rev. Dr. Francis Morrissey. Fr. Morrissey is one of the most respected canonists in the world. To be a canon law student is not remarkable at all. The only thing that takes is money! But to study under Fr. Morrissey, that is something all together different. This is a privilege and an honor.

One is not simply a disciple, but a disciple of of Jesus Christ! We place ourselves under him and we seek to learn all that he has to teach us. Today's readings tell us at least two things about what it means to study under Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas "strengthened the spirits of the disciple sand exhorted them to persevere in the faith." They needed this encouragement because to be a student of Jesus will eventually and always lead to one place-Golgotha.

The opening prayer put it this way, "Almighty ever living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us..." This is to say, constantly accomplish within us the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple is to study under the person of Jesus, especially as he endured his passion, hung upon the cross, and rose from the dead. It is to beg Jesus to make holy our suffering, to make sense of death, and to renew within us a constant trust in the new life of the resurrection.

We live in a fallen, sinful world. Every one among us will suffer. The only question is, "Whom will we stand under when it is our turn?"

Some teachers proclaim the futility of suffering, that it serves no holy purpose and ought to be avoided at all cost, and tolerated only to a certain degree. This will inevitably lead the student to despair.

Some teachers proclaim that death is an end, a catapult into nothingness. This will lead the student to focus too much on the present moment and to maximize pleasure at any cost. This will lead the student to narcissism, selfishness and self-destruction.

Stand under Jesus! He will teach you that suffering is a reparation for sin. That death is a birth into eternal life. In Jesus, in the fullness of time, "... (God) will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away."

To stand with Jesus is to have constantly accomplished in us the paschal mystery.

Jesus himself tells us what it means to study under him, "...I give you a new commandment: love one another." The paschal mystery is not about suffering for the sake of suffering. No! It is about suffering for the sake of love.

If we are to constantly accomplish the paschal mystery, we are to be about loving one another.

Stop making excuses. Stop justifying your omissions and failures. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a student of love. You CAN love more completely. Begin today.

General Intercessions

My brothers and sisters, in the joy of this Easter season let us bring our prayers to God our Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, in the joy of this Easter season we ask you to hear the prayers that we offer in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the one who was raised from the dead to bring us new life and new home, you Son, Jesus Christ.

Sending