

Fourth Sunday of Easter – Cycle B

The stone rejected by us has become the cornerstone. It is curious that we reject God's Word – but we don't really realize what we are doing. If I were to convince you that God sent me a message that you will be eternally happy if you go to confession once a month, you might listen. But if Oprah Winfrey lost 50 pounds and told you that you could do the same, you would surely listen to her. Well, we have rejected the message from God and Jesus (who is the cornerstone). We listen to society standards who promise us that we will be happy if we only follow society's simple formulas. Yes, we are promised happiness but usually we end up lonely if we follow society's formulas.

- By society standards, we stay on the surface because it is pleasing to the eye (no conflict, no controversy, no mess)
- By society standards, we believe we must be strong and conquering those weaker than us
- By society standards, we worship what is popular because we want to fit in and be loved. We think we will be loved if we are like everyone else.

- By God's standards, we are created in His image and we want to like Jesus and we are always loved no matter what
- By God's standards, we feel compassion and want to help those that are down and hurt
- By God's standards, we value people because they are God's creation, not because they are popular or just like us

The world does not recognize God's standards because the world does not know God. The world thinks that they will survive on the strength of their own abilities. If you want to survive on your own – you will be alone – if you want to survive on the love of God – you will have friends for the rest of your life.

Jesus did not fit the mold set by society. He set new standards where the weak were strong. They are weak because they don't use their God-given talents to build themselves strong, they use their God-given talents to build a better place for everyone. God uses the weak to show up the strong to prove to us that God's wisdom will always be in our best interest. If you build up one person, you have one good specimen of the human body, but if you build up the Body of Christ, you have love. If you build up one person – you have loneliness – if you build up the Body of Christ – you have heaven.

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. The fourth Sunday of Easter is always Good Shepherd Sunday. Its really important that we realize that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Just like the shepherd, Jesus will always seek us out when we are lost. If you wander off into the wolves den, Jesus will be there to bring you home.

The verse right before our gospel reading is John 10:10. I have come that they might have life and have it to the full. And then:

"I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Jesus gave his life for new life - we give of ourselves for new life. And the cycle repeats. Jesus, the shepherd will protect us and give us life to the full if we only follow the shepherd.

- We don't have to spend all of our time trying to be the center of attention (be yourself and you will find yourself in the center)
- We don't have to spend all of our time trying to be famous (if you have no need to be known, you will be remembered)
- We don't have to spend all of our time making people like you (if you are non-possessive in your relationships, you will make plenty of friends)

Fr. Chester, who passed last Wednesday, did not seek attention, did not pursue fame, did not cling to people. Yet, Jesus his Shepherd always gave him the grace and strength to be in the center of our lives and was loved by many. He did not meet society's standards for success. He was short, stooped over, and talked funny (smooch time). By society standards he wouldn't be awarded with trophies, money, or fame. But you are monuments to his success. He was a good shepherd who gave his life for you – and you can take what Fr. Chester gave you and you can give life to others. And the cycle repeats.

Fr. Chester understood that if you build up one person – you have loneliness – if you build up the Body of Christ – you have heaven. Fr. Chester is in heaven urging on all of the saints to build you up.

Fourth Sunday of Easter
May 2-3, 2009
Prayers of the Faithful

That pastors and ministers guide their flocks with tender care,
we pray to the Lord:

That we rely on the saints to guide us and give life to all,
we pray to the Lord:

That governments carefully guard the safety and quality of food,
we pray to the Lord:

That farmers and ranchers who feed the nations receive a fair return for their labor,
we pray to the Lord:

That those preparing for graduation find challenging mentors and teachers throughout their lives,
we pray to the Lord:

That parents and catechists, teachers and day care providers nourish and challenge the children in their care,
we pray to the Lord:

That this community of faith welcome and support those seeking faith,
we pray to the Lord: