

## Homily - 3rd Sunday Easter YC

During my formation at St Augustine's seminary, there was a shift in attitude towards how the "Come and See" weekends were to be organized. Rather than focus on all the requirements, as a check list to be completed, for entry into the seminary, the weekend began to focus on discernment on our primary and fundamental vocation to follow Christ. It is within this fundamental and primary vocation, given at Baptism, strengthened through Confirmation and nourished through the Holy Eucharist, that one is able to discern further how they are to follow Christ In particular...as a ministerial priest, or in marriage as a faithful and loving husband, or in the single state. However, not everyone is able to go on a "Come and See" weekend, nor can they take time away from family and other obligations to go on a retreat. So I propose that we look at the Easter season as a 50 day retreat...a 50 day "Come and See" experience...to reflect and discern upon our primary and fundamental vocation in following Christ.

One of the more beautiful prayers during the Easter season which we can take for meditation is found in some of the "prayers after communion" which read that having received and been nourished by the Eucharist, we are being lead to pass from former ways to newness of life. Our whole life then becomes a reflection of looking at our former ways...our former habits that cause us to stumble and fall, and rejoice that through the sacraments, we can follow Christ with purity of mind and heart.

The problem for many is that we slip back into former ways...we go back to our old way of living...forgetting our primary and fundamental vocation to follow Christ. Even those closest to the Lord, his disciples, had this problem. Peter, by going back to fishing with the seven disciples is saying in effect: "the whole episode of our 'following' of Jesus of Nazareth is over. We had better go back to our fishing." Their previous encounters with the risen Lord in the upper room came and went...and from the looks of things probably had some effect on them, but nothing lasting.

Yet, Peter's third encounter with the risen lord is different than the last two. He is confronted with His former ways. Through the solemn scene...the questioning of Peter about his love and loyalty with the risen Lord by the sea, Peter is reminded of his personal shortcomings...of his thrice denial of the Divine Master on that Holy Thursday night. What led Peter to this denial was his weak and unreliable character. He talked big... He boasted...He was filled with pride that made him forget about his weakness, that he is just a sinful man. Filled with this inordinate self-confidence Peter forgets his own complete and utter dependence on God. This lead him to follow Christ at a distance...and the result was a disaster.

If we are slipping back into former ways...into old ways of doing things, we should look to Peter's failures. First, we should confront these bad habits in prayer with the Lord. Secondly, we should open our hearts and receive the grace to follow Christ as His disciples by thorough, unwavering devotion and wholehearted consecration, no matter what the cost... by declaring, publicly and relentlessly that we are devoted to the Divine Master...it is Him whom we love. Lastly, we respond to the grace in loving service to those we meet by the example of life and witnessing in word...feeding all with the Good News of Christ.

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We see this conversion in Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. Such a difference from Holy Thursday...and all it took was a little bit of humble pie, and the power of the Holy Spirit. He is filled with Holy Boldness...he is unwavering in his proclamation that he is a follower of Christ... And instead of fear dictating their actions, they rejoice in suffering for the sake of the one whom they love.

Pray then, that as a community filled with faith in the Christ who is risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father, that this love which inspired Peter and the other disciples may be alive in us...and empowered by Christ, obedient to his will, we may faithfully follow Christ as his disciples.