

Brothers and sisters,

Last week, we started asking the question, “*Now what do I do?*” After hearing the proclamation of the gospel - the kerygma - and being “cut to the heart” with the people in Acts chapter 2, what are the next steps for a person who wants to become a disciple of Jesus? What does faith lead a person to do? In Acts 2:38-39, Peter responds very simply: “*Repent, and be baptized everyone one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.*” Simple. If I want to become a disciple of Jesus, my first steps in response are to repent of my sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of my sins. In doing this, I will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the same gift given to the apostles and Mary on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12).

Now, the good news is that most, maybe all of us have been baptized already. Although, if you are reading this and aren't baptized, come and talk to me so we can get you started on that. For those who are baptized, then, we can become more aware that the Holy Spirit has already been given to us, both in Baptism and in the sacrament of Confirmation. (If you haven't received the Catholic sacrament of Confirmation, come and talk to me, too.) What more can we do? We can still repent. Each of us sins every day. We either ignore God's will or reject God's will. We fail to learn God's commandments in his Word or through his Church, or we reject his commandments. Sometimes our sins are less serious and sometimes they are more serious, but nonetheless we can repent. We can reconsider our previous disposition and attitude toward the Lord in order to reorient ourselves back to him. I'll write more about each of the sacraments in the coming weeks, but maybe some of us need to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, coming before the Lord with hearts that are done with the rebellion and ready to submit to his will.

Further on in this passage, it says that those who were present received the word and so were baptized, about three thousand souls were added to their number that day. Three thousand men and women decided to surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus in one day. Beautiful. May he grant us the same grace of surrender.

May the Lord give you his peace!
Fr. Bryan