

4th Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2020
“A Second Chance”

Acts 2: 14...41

1 Pet 2:20-25

Jn 10:1-10

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

We have all made mistakes. In fact, we have all probably made serious mistakes. And with any mistake, there are always consequences. The consequences might be immediate – or they might be delayed – but they always follow.

One way to avoid mistakes is to seek sound advice beforehand from experienced and wise people whom we trust. Parents are the ones who, necessarily, help their children avoid mistakes.

However, young people will often go against parental direction and fail anyway. Then, it is important for parents to allow their charges to suffer the consequences of their mistake. Because enduring the pain of the consequences is part of maturing and learning for the future. Moreover, the sooner that anyone learns from their mistakes, the better it is for everyone involved.

It is also important for parents never to reject their children when they fail. Everyone needs a second chance. Even when we have done something terrible, we need a chance to make things right – and to get on the right track for the future. This is what God ordained to happen through the apostles in the first reading for today.

As Jesus forgave his disciples that first Easter Sunday evening – so did God do for the Chosen People on that first Pentecost Sunday. Somehow, a crowd formed outside the place where the disciples were in hiding – And when the apostles emerged on the balcony, the people who had gathered were struck to the heart by what Peter had to say.

Peter accused them of the terrible thing they had done – or at least, had aided and abetted. They had crucified the very one who had come to save them. But they could change. They could see the truth of their criminality – their horrendous mistake – and repent! They could change their minds, their hearts, their behavior – and embrace Jesus as their savior. For God had not only raised Jesus from the dead, but He had also made him Lord and Messiah.

Moreover, Jesus had made available the gift of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit would, henceforth, guide and direct them in every aspect of their lives – if they were open to the Spirit’s counsel and direction!

Peter takes everything a step further in the 2nd scripture reading for today. Certainly, we understand that we must suffer the consequences of our mistakes, sins, and crimes. But Peter tells us that we must also suffer, patiently, for what others have done – or done to us – when we are innocent.

This is what Jesus, himself, did with his passion and death. Jesus took upon himself the burden of all our misdeeds. He, the innocent one, suffered – so that grace could be unleashed for those of us who are repentant ourselves. Moreover, as in the case of Jesus, something marvelous and good occurs when we suffer patiently for what others have done. Our pain is joined to that of Jesus for the salvation of the world!

In the Gospel selection, Jesus tells us that he is our shepherd – our guide and our protector. He is also the gate – the very entrance way to all that is good for our souls and spirits.

Jesus also warns us not to be misled by satan, the father of lies. Most of us have probably been taken in at some time by a “Con-Man”, by someone who is a charlatan and takes advantage of us – or uses us for some selfish purpose. It’s always embarrassing to realize that we were “taken-in” or “conned”. But this is also part of learning from our mistakes.

Fortunately we have been given the Holy Spirit as our guide into the unknown. That Spirit works in different ways – through the Gospel – through others – in our heart of hearts – and, often, even in our “gut”. We would do well always to be attuned to what the Spirit is telling us – and where Jesus is leading us through his Spirit.

So, Brothers and Sisters, let us pray for the humility to learn from our mistakes – May we be an inspiration and a blessing for others – May we guide our young people with wisdom – And may we be willing to give others another chance after they have failed!

Amen.

May 3, 2020

Msgr. Russell G. Terra