

[Readings: Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Psalm 34; Eph 5:21-32; Jn 6:60-69]

“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

“This saying is hard; who can accept it?”

“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

“This saying is hard; who can accept it?”

“Wives should be submissive to their husbands in everything.”

“THIS saying is hard; who can accept it?”

There’s been some hard sayings in the news over the past two weeks.

Father Thomas Berg is a priest of the Archdiocese of New York and author of the book, [\*Hurting in the Church: A Way Forward for Wounded Catholics\*](#). He spoke about the challenges Catholics face amid the Church’s sexual abuse and misconduct scandals.

With everything that has been coming out in the news recently about sexual abuse and its cover-up in the Church, a very common reaction is one of betrayal. Especially persons who for years have collaborated with bishops, worked in chanceries, worked for bishops, collaborated in apostolates, have headed up bishop’s capital campaigns, have been donors and so on. Part of the very common experience is this raw emotional wound of betrayal. *Where is Jesus in the midst of this crisis?*

Jesus is the Healer of wounds, and Jesus does not leave the members of His mystical body without healing when we seek it.

And those wounds are opened up. This is where not only can Jesus bring healing, but He can also use that experience of woundedness, whether that is personally or institutionally or spiritually as the Body of Christ. He uses those wounds to bring greater good, to bring grace and healing to His Church.

The Jesus who comes into this experience is Jesus who appeared with His glorious wounds. Even after His glorious Resurrection, the wounds were still there. The wounds are mystically important, and we can unite our wounds to Jesus and allow Him to unite those in a mystical way, in a redemptive way, to His redemptive work.

There is also anger. There is certainly such a thing as just anger. Hopefully that anger gets channeled into good, positive action steps. That is a very healthy starting point to getting to a better place. In this context, it is an important part of rightly channeling our energies and our reactions prayerfully and in docility to the Holy Spirit. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to come fully into that experience of hurt in this ecclesial context.

Catholic radio host and author Teresa Tomeo has this to say: “Is the Eucharist real? Are the Church teachings about Jesus in the Eucharist true? Are all the other teachings true?” If we really believe in the Eucharist and the other beautiful teachings of the Church, then one doesn’t walk away when the situation gets really tough.

During the Church scandals of his days, St. Francis de Sales called such behavior spiritual murder. He cautions that anyone who chooses to leave the Church because of the scandalous behavior of others commits spiritual suicide. If what the Church teaches and tries to live out is true, then we stay. We stay to fight for those truths and help others fight for them as well.

Over the centuries in the history of our Church, Teresa Tomeo says, it has often been the laity that was responsible for getting the battered and often bruised Barque of Peter back on course. Now is not the time to abandon ship. Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and get busy through prayer, fasting, respectful and direct feedback and involvement, and help guide the Church through these latest troubled waters, all because she carries with her the cargo of truth.

In other words, Fr. Michael Schmitz, a Catholic priest/blogger says it this way: “Don’t LEAVE, LEAD!”

Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. As a result of this, many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him. “Do you also want to leave?”

What moments of truth have you had? What made you choose the path you took? Psalm 34 tells us that God is close to the brokenhearted and crushed in spirit. How have you experienced that truth?

Authority and obedience are key concerns in Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians. What struggles do you have in these areas? The apostles believe Jesus has the words of eternal life. Do you? Why do you stay with Jesus and His Church?

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”

“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” AMEN!