

August 26, 2018:	21 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in O.T. (A)
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading:	Book of the Prophet Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b
Responsorial Psalm: 34	"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading:	Ephesians 5:21-32
Gospel:	John 6:60-69

**"IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT GIVES LIFE, WHILE THE FLESH IS OF NO AVAIL"**  
**(In moral failures, evil persists when good people do nothing)**

- Last week I spoke with you about what it means to be "***In-Communion***" with Jesus and His Church, by being better prepared to make two Holy Communions (**Word + Sacrament**) at Mass.
- **Part 5 - Eucharistic Discourse.** **Murmuring:** "*This saying is hard, who can accept it?*" **Scandal:** "*Does this shock you?*" **Fallout:** "*As a result of this, many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him.*"
- Since the horrible news broke (8/14/18) I've wanted to have a **heart to heart** with you about the on-going grave moral scandal in the Church involving yet another horrific report of sexual abuse by Catholic Clergy, this time in the state of Pennsylvania. True, well over 95% of the cases are pre-2000, but the magnitude of sexual abuse over 70+ years shouldn't give us any consolation.
- Coming on the heels of the twisted Cardinal McCarrick revelations, **this saying is hard, who can accept it?** But, it's more than hard, it's repulsive and as a Priest of Jesus Christ, your Pastor, and chaplain for **Grief to Grace Minnesota** it pierces my heart to receive such news.
- **Does this Shock you? Yes!** But, it doesn't just shock me, **it justifiably angers me**, as it should all of you, **it humanly repulses me**, as it should all of you, and **it deeply saddens me**, as I'm sure it does all of you, that there have been and are a few wolves in sheep's clothing within the priesthood and amongst the bishops.
- Last Sunday (8/19/18) I watched on the evening news about how all the dioceses in Pennsylvania were gathering for what was themed forgiveness Sunday. **To hell with that.** I'm all about God's love and mercy, but now's the time for God's justice (however painful) to clean up and prevent this ugly mess. Sin abides in the darkness, and continues when good people do nothing, but it's long overdue for real **transparency** and **accountability** regarding who abused, who cooperated with it, and who covered it up. Mercy and forgiveness can come later.
- As utterly painful as this is, and no matter how many times I read and hear about such acts of evil, I pray that I will never become indifferent to the suffering of victims, their families, and the mystery of the cross. But, what a veil of tears it has left.

- While it's both right and good to be angry regarding these on-going scandals. Yet, to justify our anger by withholding support for, or even leaving the Church, like many have already done, **that's not what Jesus would do.** ***"Be angry, but do not sin in your anger."*** (Ephesians 4:26)
- Ok! But, if our heart is in the right place, we necessarily feel a righteous anger. Still, we all know that we can't stay there, for the devil wants to use such grave sins and scandals to continue dividing the body of Christ. **We must not let it happen.** For, even amidst grave scandals and the mystery of evil in the world and the Church today, we need to be reminded over and over of a fundamental truth: **The Church is Christ's Bride (His Spouse), and therefore, Divine in its essence (not its members), and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.** But that doesn't mean it won't suffer greatly for the sins of its members, particularly from the sins of the fathers.
- **While Jesus didn't need us to redeem us; He chose not to redeem us without us.** Therefore, I believe more firmly today than ever, that what's happening in the Church, or rather what God has allowed to happen is for Her purification, for good never comes without the cross.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Station: The Church Picks-Up Her Cross and Follows After Jesus**

***"We adore You O Christ and we praise You, for by your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world."***

- **So, where do we go from here?** Jesus laid down His life for His friends (you and me) and we are called to pick-up our cross and follow-after Him to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, and set the captives free. Let me offer an **acronym** using our fist and 5 fingers for six things we must all do as believers and partakers in Christ's Word and His Body and Blood: **FIST: JESUS ALONE IS OUR ROCK** and **FINGERS: P-E-A-C-E**:

- P**: Prayer - Be more intentional and faithful and fervent  
**E**: Exercise - Faith-Hope-Love in the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy  
**A**: Accountability - Am I striving for Christian Virtue and Integrity?  
**C**: Conversion - How am I living my Baptism to become more like Jesus Christ  
**E**: Eucharist - ***"For My Flesh is real food; My Blood is real drink."*** (John 6:55)

The **Church** and making the **Holy Name of JESUS** better known-loved are at a **Cross-Roads**.

### **WILL YOU LEAVE HER ALSO?**

May our hearts boldly echo the profession of **St. Peter**: ***"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."*** And may the **Prophet Joshua's** commitment become ours as well:

***"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."***