

Fourth Sunday of Lent

My beloved brothers and sisters, there is an old say: “You never really know someone until you know what is in their heart.” In other words, what is in the heart is what motivates us, what we are truly seeking, and the reason why we do the things we do. In this Gospel passage, we see unveiled for us the Heart of God Himself in Jesus. Jesus lays bare for us His own heart!

He is talking with Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest ruling body of the Jews. It takes place at night, because Nicodemus is afraid to talk to Jesus openly; however, in John’s Gospel, there is a use of night and darkness as a continual symbol throughout the Gospel. Jesus is bringing light to Nicodemus who is caught in the darkness of his fears. Perhaps they are sitting around a campfire and talking, and it is here that Jesus unveils the plan of God throughout the course of history to him. The plan of God, is the plan of unconditional, infinite love made visible in Jesus. From the creation of Adam and Eve, until the final judgement, Jesus is the plan of God made visible for us; He is the Face of God, the Heart of God made visible for us! Why did God come in the flesh of Jesus? Because the Father sent Him to us. Why did God send Him? Because He loved us so much. God could not bear to see us perish in our sins, He longed to share with us His everlasting life, and to immerse us in that life.

Jesus Christ is the definitive proof that God loves us- so much so, that He is willing to sacrifice His only Son to atone for the sins that have separated us from God, who is the source of all life! However, to enter into this Divine life requires that I am willing to accept it! God will never force us to accept His love. This requires that I stake my life upon this love, like a helpless little child stakes its life upon the love of its mother and father. There is no hidden agenda here, it is pure generosity, and this is the heart of God made visible to us! It is only when I begin to accept this reality, that I begin to live in it! Jesus is longing to lead us into the very heart of God Himself.

Sometimes, we are tempted to think that I can earn this eternal life, simply by going to mass and being nice; however, that never really leads us into the deep and infinite life that God desires for us- a baby doesn’t earn its parents love- they

love him! Sometimes I may think that I am so great a sinner, and the things I have done are so awful and terrible, that I am already lost. That is the great lie of Satan who wants to drag us into his own despair! Don't listen to him; he is the deceiver of the brethren. Listen to Jesus, don't prefer the darkness; rather, seek the Light and live in His light. Stake your eternal life on Him, that is our response to His Grace. We do this by putting all of our time, our talents and our material goods at His service and the service of our brothers and sisters in the world.

In the end, Nicodemus became one of the early bishops of the Church- he listened, and although was afraid, overcame his hesitations and became a saint. So can we; Jesus wants this for us, our job, like a little Child, is to surrender ourselves to His Divine Work within our lives!