

Sixteen Sunday in Ordinary Time 2018

My beloved brothers and sisters: in the Gospel for today, Jesus has just gotten off of the boat after crossing the sea of Galilee back to Caphernaum. This is one of the most extraordinary of Gospel stories, because it shows us the heart of Jesus for us. The Gospel tells us that when He saw the crowds: "His heart was moved, for they were like sheep without a shepherd..." To leave a flock of sheep without a shepherd was to expose them to the Judean lions, the hyenas, and jackals that still roamed the wilderness where they grazed. Jesus cannot do this! He looks upon us as His own, and He descended from heaven to take on a human heart, so that He could show us the heart of mercy and love of God for us! He truly cares for us; He truly feels our needs and our struggles, even more deeply than those who are closest to us; because, He sees us and our struggles with the perfect heart of God! This is the meaning of the greatest of devotions: the Sacred Heart, where the burning heart of Divine Love is made visible to us.

In the same way, Jesus says to His apostles and to us: "Come away with me to a deserted place and rest awhile..." Jesus knows the depths of our struggles and our cares. He knows that life can be hard, and He invites us into the intimacy of His heart, everyday- this is the purpose of our prayer, to lead us into the quiet place of Jesus' heart. This isn't just for chosen Saints, it is our refuge. Jesus isn't just our teacher; He is our friend, and He wants us to be His closest of friends! Think of this, God makes it possible for us enter into His intimate friendship, because He is already in love with us.

The two most eloquent signs of God's yearning for our friendship, are the two sacraments that He has given us: The Eucharist and Confession. By confession, God wants us to know His readiness to forgive and to re-immers us into His friendship and love. There is a really funny commercial from Liberty mutual. In it, a husband talks about Liberty's readiness to forgive a small accident, and then turns to His wife and says: "See Karen, there are some people who do not hold grudges..." Not only does our Good God not hold grudges, in the Sacrament of Confession, He utterly forgets our sins, even though we repeat them again and again!

The Second sign He has given us of His yearning for us is the Eucharist; by it, we already have an infinite and complete union with our God. We become what we eat. Our Good God looks on us in the same love He looks upon His most beloved Son Jesus! At the very end of his life, when worn out and utterly exhausted by his constant work for God's people, he received His last Communion with Christ; he whispered: "How kind the Good God is! When we are no longer able to go to Him, He comes to us!" This is what Jesus does for us every single time we come to Confession, we come to Mass, and every time we pray!