

Sunday Reflection by: Paul Mulligan, May 10, 2020

5th Sunday of Easter - Year "A"

Acts 6:1-7, Psalm 33, 1 Peter 2: 4-9, John 14: 1-12

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ.

In more than 2000 years of Christianity, there have been libraries and libraries of scripture and writings from the apostles and the church fathers for us to study, so why the lack of faith? Maybe because humans can be very visual and we need more visible proof. Maybe because we were not there in the time of Jesus. Maybe because we did not put our hands into the wounds of Jesus as Thomas needed to do to believe, as we heard in the Gospel just a few weeks ago. I am sure from time to time each one of us may feel like Thomas.

Even in today's Gospel, Thomas said to Jesus "Lord we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way? It seems somehow appropriate that doubting Thomas would be the one that did not see the big picture, but it wasn't only Thomas. This time it was also Philip. Philip asks Jesus to show us the Father. Jesus replies "whoever has seen me has seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father is in me". Jesus rebukes them because they have spent three years together and they have not figured out who He truly is and who His Father truly is. The apostles do not realize at this point that they are witnessing the first two parts of the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son, and later on during Pentecost they will receive the Holy Spirit.

During His discussions with the apostles, Jesus was saying goodbye, but they didn't understand why, as they thought they would be with him always. Jesus was going to prepare a place for them just as he has for us. It's not that He has to make room, as that place already exists, but we too have to prepare and we have to want to be with him and He will return for us. Jesus came down from heaven to share in our humanity and He wanted the apostles and us to be like him.

Is there a challenge to believe because we did not see him in person? It may be troublesome to think that some of us may lose or lack faith from time to time, but don't let your hearts be troubled, as it does happen.

I certainly know I have. All through my life I questioned whether I should or shouldn't be a follower of Christ, or if there was something else out there. My faith grew as I discovered more about Jesus, but even through my diaconate formation I questioned my motives. Why was I doing this? Why did God really want me, and what did He want me to do? I always think, there must be others that could do much better than I ever could. We must realize that no matter how lost we feel, and no matter what we have done, we can never erase God's love.

We are reminded of all of Jesus' many wonderful works that He had done on earth, and it should become a tool that strengthens our faith. Jesus called on His disciples not only to continue that work, but to do even more work.

As we read in the book of Acts, the apostles did their best to continue the work of Jesus, but things were getting extremely hard as the discipleship kept growing larger and larger as they would preach the word of God. They could not keep up with the demand of caring for the widows and the less fortunate who were

being neglected and continue to preach to the many followers, so they decided to select seven men who were full of spirit and wisdom to support their mission in continuing the work of their Lord. These men would care for the marginalized of society. As the discipleship continued its growth, they discovered that the good works of service were equally as important as preaching Gods word. With the growth of the church came the responsibility of caring for the less fortunate. This is when the work of the seven men had to be expanded into what we know today as the
the diaconate.

Although we all become servants at the sacrament of our baptism the Deacon is ordained by the Bishop and receives Holy Orders as a sacramental sign of Christ the servant. Just as the first seven men, Deacons offer service to those in need. Deacons must use their God given gifts to serve the people of the church and those most in need. Just as the apostles needed more men to serve the marginalized, todays Bishops need the support of Deacons to shepherd His flock within His diocese. The Deacon is there to serve the Bishop in any way the Bishop sees fit. In most cases the Deacon is given a ministry within the community, possibly in hospitals, long term care homes, prisons, or with those that are pushed to the fringes of society including addictions and the poor. The Deacon is there to serve them in any way they can, whether it is to guide them in the right direction, or at times just being present to listen. The Deacon is also given a liturgical base where he will proclaim the Gospel, sometimes preach, and assist the pastor in liturgical celebrations. He can also support the pastor by witnessing marriage, baptizing or presiding at funerals. But I also have to tell you, that a Deacon is not present to replace a priest or become a so-called mini priest. During mass the Deacon is

present, to represent those that cannot be there. A Deacon's main purpose is to serve the marginalized outside of mass.

We all have God given gifts, and it is the duty of each one of us to serve others using those gifts and to share the work load for the good of our Lord. Each one of us has a vocation in life. It could be a teacher, a doctor, a mother, a father, a husband, a wife. Whatever our vocation is, we are to do it to the best of our ability. We don't do it so we can see our names in lights. We don't live for applause. We must serve with humility. God knows, and that is what matters.

There is never a better time to start serving. Make no mistake, when you serve others, it not only helps those less fortunate it actually makes your faith in Jesus Christ even stronger knowing that you are continuing His work.

Look deep inside your hearts and you will find your calling and through your calling you find the love of Jesus Christ.

Make no mistake, He already knows your name and He will never turn His back on you.