

## **Homily – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

‘New Life in Christ – To bring fulfilment to the world’

There was a song by Abba in the 80’s – Knowing Me, Knowing You, Is the best I can do. I thought of that song in relation to situations we find ourselves in. St John, who knew Jesus better than most, save the Father, wrote, “We can know that we are living in him and he is living in us because he lets us share his Spirit. It only struck me recently how honoured we are as People of God; that God lets us share his Spirit, His Holy Spirit. This is no random disposition of a Divine or Sacred Power – this is a centred and systematic plan of revelation that the whole world has access to, should humanity be willing to make that choice.

‘Knowing Me Knowing You is a sign of a relationship of love or covenant of love. Abraham recognises that love at Mamre The Father of faith, Moses seals that love by the Arc of the Covenant on Mt Sinai. The ancient prophets defend and nurture that Covenant in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel etc. And then John the Baptist the last great prophet declares to the world the Messianic fulfilment in the coming of Jesus. This is a God not only of Israelite Jews but a God of all nations; seeking to consecrate them in the truth. – this is why Jesus declares in his farewell discourse...

“As you sent me into this world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth:”

The fulfilment of that relationship with the eternal covenant sealed by Jesus, is the sacrament of Baptism.

I was disturbed some time ago by hearing of a teacher in a Catholic School saying to the children, all religions are of equal value. This is not strictly true. Yes all mainstream religions have some sort of moral + spiritual value, but it is having faith in the One true God is so crucial to knowing the God of our salvation, that God who is three persons, The Creator God (Father), The Saviour God (Son) and the Sustainer God (Holy Spirit). If the fullness of God’s redeeming love is found in Christianity, which I believe, then why not embrace it for what it is?

In Lumen Gentium, the Vt II Document on the Church. – The first definition of the Church on earth is ‘The Baptised People of God’. Yes, there are elements of Divine revelation very powerful one’s in the Jewish faith, and also in the Islamic faith. There are good loving people too, who have; through fault of their own, not yet got to know the person of Christ, and they too can inherit salvation. However, the fulness of the knowledge of God, or the truth that comes from God, is found most fully in the Catholic Christian tradition; the new universal People of God:

It’s a case of why make do with a poor copy, a replica, or an unfinished article, when you can have the real thing?

Yes, the institutional Church has its faults, just like any other worldwide organisation run by human beings, influenced by power, wealth and politics. However, the core essence of Christian discipleship remains beautiful, holy and life giving, because its centred-on love.

As St Augustine once wrote, our hearts are restless O Lord, till they rest in you.

In passing, just think in the Holy Land if all the peoples living there, had embraced Christ, as their Lord and Saviour and celebrated that in the one way, what a difference it would make to world peace? Remember Jesus, did not come to found a ‘New Religion’ as such, but a refreshingly unifying way for all, the whole world to be in union with the living God in love. Let us always keep this in mind. The goal of it all is union with God in love (St Augustine) “If the last day of this life shall find

anyone in such progress and growth, holding fast to the faith of the Mediator, he will be received by the holy angels in order that he may be brought to the God whom he has worshipped”.

“Knowing Me, Knowing You Is the best I can do”.

God Bless you All

Fr Jeremy Bath