

Forming Good Stewards

Good stewards are formed by other good stewards!

Please make sure this is distributed to the *pastor*, to the other *priest* and *deacons* in the parish, and to the *person who produces the bulletin*.

Bulletin Bites

May 5, 2019

Third Sunday of Easter

John 21:1-19

Option 1

“Children, have you caught anything to eat.”

After Thomas proclaimed “My Lord and my God” in the upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared to Thomas and six other disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias [Galilee]. Jesus called them *Children*. In light of their actions in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the House of Caiaphas, and their absence at the foot of the cross, Jesus might have called them something else. But Jesus was not berating them. Neither should we. The disciples heard Jesus and saw miraculous things. They also saw people brutally beaten and crucified by the Romans, and lived under the domination of Jewish leaders. When Jesus was arrested they were fearful. Despite all they had heard and seen, their faith was childlike - not strong and mature. When Jesus calls the disciples *Children* He is saying “I love you like a parent, despite your faults and failings.” He was also saying, “You have much to learn.” If we hear Jesus call us *Children* do we realize He is saying “I love you very much, but you have much learn”? How will we respond?

Option 2

“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

After his Resurrection Jesus reveals Himself for a third time to seven of His disciples who have been fishing all night on the Sea of Tiberias [Galilee]. He ask them, “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” In many ways their faith was like that of a child. The scene is a reminder of His first call to them to become *fishers of men*. Jesus prepares and shares with them a breakfast of the fish they caught. Three times Jesus ask Simon Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, now proclaims his love for Jesus three times, then adds, “Lord you know everything; you know that I love you.” Peter reveals that his faith in Jesus has matured. When we encounter Jesus in the people and events in our life He is asking us, “Do you love me?” How do we respond? Is our faith in Jesus like that of a child. Or is it constantly maturing such that we have no doubt that He is God and that He knows what is in our heart? Is our faith in Jesus as strong as Simon Peter? How do we demonstrate our faith in Jesus?

May 12, 2019
Fourth Sunday of Easter
John 10:27-30

Option 1

“The Father and I are one.”

After comparing his disciples to sheep who know the voice of their shepherd and saying that they know his voice and he knows them, Jesus assures those who follow Him that they will have eternal life. He then adds that “The Father and I are one.” Today’s passage can only be understood when read in the context of the whole of Chapter 10 of John’s Gospel. Jesus uses many images of the care and concern of the shepherd for the sheep, and the total dependence of the sheep on their shepherd. They were images the disciples were very familiar with because herds of sheep with their shepherds were everywhere. In fact, they are still very common in the Holy Land today. But the message of Jesus in Chapter 10 of St. John’s Gospel is: If you believe in me, if you do as I do and imitate my care and concern and love for you, by loving one another, then my Spirit is in you. If my Spirit is in you, then you and I are one, just as the Father and I are one. Is not union with God, Father, Son and Spirit, what we are all seeking?

Option 2

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me.”

We can identify family and friends and many public figures by their voice. Jesus tells us that His followers hear His voice and that He knows them and they know him. But, do we listen for the voice of Jesus? Do we know the voice of Jesus? Do we hear the voice of Jesus in the needs and concerns of our family, our friends, and strangers - through the people and events in our lives. What do we do when we hear His voice telling us God’s will for us? Jesus challenges us to be and to do all that God created us to be and do; to love the unlovable people in our lives, to challenge the evil we see in our world, to take the risk of being rejected, ostracized and abused for standing up for the forgotten, oppressed and persecuted. If our first response is “No!” we probably just heard the voice of Jesus. It is part of our human nature to resist loving the unlovable, to shy from a challenge, to avoid the risk of actions that may bring retaliation from others. Our second response might also be “No.” But our final response must be “Yes Lord!”

May 19, 2019
Fifth Sunday of Easter
John 13:31-35

Option 1

**“This is how all will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.”**

At the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples He tried to prepare them for the persecution He was expecting from the Jewish leaders and the Romans. Jesus had done nothing wrong, but it was the good He had done that was a threat to the power and wealth of the people in control. Jesus was also preparing His disciples to carry on his mission and teach His message after he was gone. And they could only do that if people knew they were his disciples by the way they loved one another, and loved others. Jesus knew His disciples would face the same threats and

treatment by the same people who wanted to stop Him. Jesus also knew that true love can be difficult for many reasons: people do evil things; people betray us; people must be corrected or punished for inappropriate or unacceptable behavior; people are an imminent threat to us or others. Love is not easy, but Jesus demonstrated it is possible.

Option 2

“I give you a new commandment: love one another.

As I have loved you, so you should also love one another.”

Jesus reminds us of the command God gave the Israelites through Moses to *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Leviticus 19:18 / Luke 10:27). Next, Jesus tells us to *“Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.”* (Matthew 5:43, Luke 6:27). Psychologists now realize that we must love ourselves to be able to love others. That is how God created us. Sadly, many of us do not love ourselves enough to feel that we can be loved by others, or even by God. And there is the risk that the only one we love is ourselves. Jesus takes love to a new dimension. *“Love one another as I have loved you” - unconditionally; without a pre-condition of recognition; without expectation of being loved in return.* God made us stewards of His love for ourselves and for others. Are we ready to give an account of our stewardship when Jesus ask, “What have you done with My love?” How have you loved one another as I love you

May 26, 2019

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Revelations 21:10-14, 22-23

“I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb”

Patmos is a charming small island in the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey where the Book of Revelations was written by John. It is a *letter* addressed to the *Seven Churches of Asia*. John employs sinister images and applies coded references to people and groups to convey the beauty of the Love of God and to challenge disciples of Jesus to stay firm in the faith in the face of rejection and persecution. He taught that God was not confined to a building, the temple in Jerusalem. Rather, Jesus, the Lamb, and all who believe in Him and imitate Him, are *temples*. Jesus challenged the teaching and threatened the livelihood of the Jewish leaders. He also challenges us to believe in God as the source of all that we have and all ever will be. When we accept God’s love for us and all that He has given us, and try to imitate Jesus, we must accept the consequences that may come with that.