

May Our Yes Mean YES
May 1, 2022
Gospel of John 21:1-19
Fr. Brad

What am I supposed to do now? Can you recall instances in your life where you have asked yourself that question? I am sure if you thought about it for awhile you would come up with a pretty lengthy list.

For example, I imagine that for some of us, as we approached the end of our high school years that thought might have surfaced.

How about other milestone events in your lives...commitment to marriage, having a child?

How about when you lose a loved one, someone you have been very close to for many years....a parent whom you never knew life without up until now....a spouse with whom you shared many years and many fond memories? I am sure the thought emerges, 'What am I supposed to do now?'

In the Gospel, the disciples are slowly learning what it means to move forward beyond the routines and securities they had come to depend on and had become accustomed to. They had developed an unconditional trust in the Lord as he walked with them during his earthly life.

Each one of us is sooner or later faced with the prospect of moving beyond dependency on particular places or circumstances for our security and confidence.

Two important lessons we need to internalize if we are to come to maturity as Peter would have to get past - - both areas we all as human beings struggle with:

Divine forgiveness

Our difficulty with talking or hearing about the bad stuff.

He who has been forgiven little, forgives little....he who has been forgiven much, forgives much.

Let's look at Peter for a moment.

Of all the apostles, after all was said and done, after the death of Jesus, Peter would be the one who is probably feeling the most guilty about things.... particularly in his own mind....he had failed his Master.

There was no doubt that his intentions were good, his commitment real based on previous episodes in the Gospel i.e., proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah...pledging to

follow Him wherever He would go....trusting...at least for a moment, that he could walk on water at the Lord's invitation. And then....balking at the end. What a way to remember your last encounter with the one you love, the one who changed your life in the best possible way. Peter was probably thinking, 'this is going to haunt me for the rest of my life'. It may have been on the other apostles minds too. They all, except for John and the women, abandoned Him at the end. In spite of the fact that they had already experienced more than one of the Lord's resurrection appearances by this time, **Peter had unfinished business.**

Peter's was a colossal failure, as he had already been deemed Cephas 'the rock' upon whom the Lord would build His Church. Some rock...the rock had crumpled. He was likely helplessly depressed.

Peter was dead in his own way as the result of denying his Master. He had betrayed himself and his own beliefs. He was probably thinking, '**How could I ever believe in myself again after what I did?**'

What could have Jesus said to him? I told you so, have you learned your lesson Peter? Now do you see why I washed your feet, big mouth?

The Lord is interested in one thing....our Yes, the yes that comes from the core of our being. Peter's yes, uttered in all its frailty and hurt, was real. When love is real, NOTHING gets in the way of our love for the object of our love...even our most colossal failures in life.

When all was said and done, Peter let nothing, not even his own sins, introduce any distance between him and the Lord he loved. **He became in touch with His utter dependence upon his Lord beyond anything he himself could do to deserve it.** That is the rock on which our faith is based.

How in touch with ourselves are we? How in love with the Lord are we? What are we willing to take on or give up for His purposes? How willing are we to trust in His love in spite of our failure to respond in kind. It's all a work in progress.

WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST BY OUR CONCERN FOR HIS SHEEP.

Learning to say what we mean and mean what we say is part of the journey to full conversion of heart. It comes through nurturing and maturing. It leads to our being in touch with our true selves and of our life in the Risen Christ.

In this Eucharist, our Lord is giving each of us a chance to choose once again our basic stance in life. May our yes ultimately be YES. Amen.