

The Third Sunday of Easter, Cycle B 2024

Saint John tells us that anyone who says he knows God, but does not fulfill his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. “To know God” is to have a personal relationship with God, and not to have mere “book knowledge” of him.

St Thomas Aquinas said “*Agere sequitur esse*”, which translates, as “How we act is who we are”. We can profess our love for Christ, and our neighbor, but unless we manifest acts of loving kindness, we are fooling ourselves.

There is a dark side in each of us. Others can provoke us and bring out the cruel, rude and angry side of us, but how we behave is part of who we are. When the ugliness in us is revealed, whether the other party was mean, cruel or unjust, or we were provoked, that ugliness is still part of us. We need to deal with it and do not blame others for our behavior. Abusive spouses always falsely blame their victims for their behavior believing it absolves them of their cruelty. Also, we do not return evil for evil. If we truly love God, we would avoid anything that would offend him or would hurt our neighbor.

St Jerome says, “Ignorance of Scriptures is the ignorance of Christ”. Peter suggested that, if the Jewish leaders and the people had known the Scriptures, they would have known that the messiah had to suffer as foretold by the prophets. Jesus opened the hearts of the disciples on the road Emmaus, when he explained

the Scriptures to them that the Christ had to suffer. He also explained to his disciples, the Scripture passages that referred to him. Everyone was expecting the messiah to be a mighty king, however, the messiah was the humble, suffering servant that Isaiah spoke of in Chapter 53. Please read this chapter in the Book of Isaiah (written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ) and you will be amazed how similar this prophecy resembles the passion of Christ. “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”

Both Peter in the first reading and Jesus in the Gospel, call us to repentance. Repentance is more than to ask God to forgive our sins, we also have to reflect on our lives and change our behaviors. Repentance requires that we resist temptation to the same sin in the future.

Abortion is such a controversial issue is because so many have acted out of ignorance, not knowing that abortion is the killing of a child but was misled to believe it was a simple medical procedure like the removal of an unwanted lesion. Peter told the Jews and their leaders, that they had killed Jesus and needed to repent and they would be forgiven and if faithful to his teachings they would be very blessed.

Those who have had an abortion are determined to keep it legal so as not to deal with the reality of their past sin, forgetting the saying of Peter to those that had killed Jesus that they would be forgiven and even be blessed if they followed his teachings. Young women

refusal to repent means that they willing to die in their sin. Please repent and be saved

We need to rethink how we celebrate our relationship with God, our awareness of the Holy. Do we take time to pray, to keep God in focus, to praise and thank God for the opportunities presented to us daily?

We need to rethink our relationship with others; with family, with friends, with those whom we disagree, and with the poor and the oppressed.

We need to rethink our budgeting of time, and resources; do we give quality time to our spouse, our children, and our parents? How do we contribute to the common good of the family?

We need to rethink the way in which we exercise faithful citizenship. Do we vote? Do we tell our politicians what are our religious concerns regarding their new laws?

We need to humbly ask for forgiveness of our sins but also to change our lives for the better.