

'ENCOUNTERING JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD IN TRUTH AND FREEDOM'
2nd Sunday Ordinary Time - HOMILY - 14 JANUARY 2018

LAMB OF GOD

Today's Gospel, John 1:35-42 begins with the words,

*"The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by,
he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!'"*

Every time we pray at Mass, we encounter Jesus as the Lamb of God.
We sometimes sing to Jesus as Lamb of God.
Following a rich tradition in the Old Testament,
John the Baptist names Jesus the Lamb of God.

Already in John 1:29, John the Baptist has said:

"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Three times at Mass, in the Communion Rite, we repeat this sentence,
and ask Jesus for mercy and peace.

"Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world"

Then the celebrant prays:

*"Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb."*

Now in John 1:36, John guides the two disciples to encounter Jesus as Lamb of God.

COME AND SEE

The Gospel continues:

*The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.
When Jesus turned and saw them following,
he said to them, 'What are you looking for?'
They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher),
where are you staying?'
He said to them, 'Come and see.'
They came and saw where he was staying,
and they remained with him that day.
It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.*

In encountering Jesus,
the two disciples FOLLOW Jesus,
they RESPOND to the invitation of Jesus to COME and SEE.
They begin to STAY with Jesus.

BRINGING SOMEONE TO JESUS

In John's Gospel, we see John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip inviting and guiding people to encounter Jesus.

*"One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
He first found his brother Simon and said to him,
'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed*).
He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said,
'You are Simon son of John.
You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter)."*

ROCK

Cephas is from the everyday language of Jesus – Aramaic – **kepha** for rock, and from the Greek language of the day **petra** for rock, translated Peter in English.

John guides Andrew and an unnamed disciple to Jesus.
Andrew in turn guides his brother Peter to Jesus.

The Gospel says:

*"One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
He first found his brother Simon and said to him,
'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed*)
He brought Simon to Jesus"*

After Jesus names Simon as Cephas,
Jesus journeys to Galilee and invites Philip to follow him.
Philip guides Nathanael to Jesus in John 1:44-45,

*"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
Philip found Nathanael and said to him
'We have found him about whom Moses in the law
and also in the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."*

We ask ourselves:

WHO IN OUR LIVES HAVE GUIDED US TO JESUS?

We pause to remember and thank God for them.

WHO DO WE GUIDE TO JESUS?

We pause and pray for them.

Several chapters later, in John 8:31-32
we learn that in following Jesus,
we believe in Jesus
we continue to be guided by the word of Jesus,
we come to know the truth,
and we are set free.

The Gospel says:

*‘Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him
“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples;
and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”’*

And we could leave today’s homily, reflecting on Jesus as the truth that sets us free.
Yet as all four Gospels attest, we live in the world.

WHAT ISSUES MIGHT WE BRING BEFORE JESUS THIS YEAR?

Today Moira joins us at all Masses.

She is visiting from our sister parish of Blackall / Tambo in central Queensland
and will share with us. Thank you Moira.

HUMAN RIGHTS and SANCTITY OF LIFE

Pope Francis in his address last week to the Diplomatic Corps spoke
on many issues that he would place before us in 2018.

Already our parish Facebook has covered his words on Iraq, Syria, Israel and Palestine.

This year is the 70th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Pope Francis says:

*“At a distance of seventy years, it is painful to see
how many fundamental rights continue to be violated today.
First among all of these is the right of every human person
to life, liberty and personal security.
It is not only war or violence that infringes these rights.
In our day, there are more subtle means:
I think primarily of innocent children discarded even before they are born,
unwanted at times simply because they are ill or malformed,
or as a result of the selfishness of adults.
I think of the elderly, who are often cast aside,
especially when infirm and viewed as a burden.
I think of women who repeatedly suffer from violence and oppression,
even within their own families.
I think too of the victims of human trafficking,
violates the prohibition of every form of slavery.
How many persons, especially those fleeing from poverty and war,
have fallen prey to such commerce perpetrated by unscrupulous individuals?*

*Defending the right to life and physical integrity also means
safeguarding the right to health on the part of individuals and their families.
Today this right has assumed implications beyond the original intentions
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
which sought to affirm the right of every individual
to receive medical care and necessary social services.
In this regard, it is my hope that efforts will be made
within the appropriate international forums to facilitate,
in the first place, ready access to medical care and treatment on the part of all.*

It is important to join forces in order to implement policies that ensure, at affordable costs, the provision of medicines essential for the survival of those in need, without neglecting the area of research and the development of treatments that, albeit not financially profitable, are essential for saving human lives.

Defending the right to life also entails actively striving for peace, universally recognized as one of the supreme values to be sought and defended. Yet serious local conflicts continue to flare up in various parts of the world. The collective efforts of the international community, the humanitarian activities of international organizations and the constant pleas for peace rising from lands rent by violence seem to be less and less effective in the face of war's perverse logic. This scenario cannot be allowed to diminish our desire and our efforts for peace. For without peace, integral human development becomes unattainable."

CONCLUDING WORDS

As we reflect on the words of Pope Francis and on the sharing of Moira, we continue to learn in practical ways about loving God and our neighbour. We continue to ask God to set us free from indifference and intolerance and sin. Free to recognise and respect the sanctity of human life in its many dimensions. Free to follow Jesus, free to abide with him, free to live the truth. We conclude today with part of John 10:10,

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[#OPYOE2018 Our Parish Year of Encounter 2018]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/010718.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook14012018>]

Other References:

Pope Francis Address to the Diplomatic Corps – 9 January 2018

UN Declaration of Human Rights



"COME AND SEE."

~

JOHN 1:39

www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com