

Word Made Flesh

What does it mean to know someone? Does looking at a person's facebook or Instagram profile count as knowing someone? It does give one a certain perception of the other person but can that actually be thought of as knowing the other person?

Jesus is challenging us today about it means to BE KNOWN by him.

We hear about the parable today of people coming to the house of the master after he has shut it. The people, confident that they know the master, come up to the door and knock saying "Lord open the door for us." What does Jesus the Master say? "I do not KNOW WHERE you are FROM." They say they've eaten with him before—we've known you at table, but again Jesus repeats the same phrase: "I do not know WHERE you are FROM." This time, however, he adds "Depart from me all you evildoers!"

Ahh! This gives us the insight that Jesus does not know where they are FROM because they are not living FROM their baptismal identity as children of God but rather FROM their own evil impulses which makes them unrecognizable because of their evil deeds.

If we listen to the word of God everyday but we gossip and speak evil of one another, then Jesus does not know us. The people at the time of Jesus heard him preach from his very own lips in their streets and even to them Jesus is saying: I do not know where you are from.

If we receive the sacraments everyday, if we eat and drink at the Eucharistic table, but we still continue to intentionally perform evil works, then Jesus does not know us. Even Judas ate and dined with our Lord, but look what fruits he bore with his actions!

St Stephen was the first king of Hungary, but unlike his father who chose baptism for political reasons, St. Stephen took his Christian identity seriously. He organized the kingdom from the chaos that it was into a thriving kingdom and he strove to serve God in through his royal duties by looking after the material and spiritual good of his subjects.

St. Stephen also used to disguise himself as a homeless person so that he could go out and give to the poor personally. He was so good at disguising himself, that a crowd of beggars who didn't recognize this royal man beat him up and stole all his food and money!

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22)

St Stephen was a man who did not let the word of God fall onto the soil of his heart without bearing fruit. He received the word and put it into action and did not deceive himself. It can be tempting to believe we have progressed so much in sanctity from just reflecting on the word of God. This can be dangerous because although we have considered so many spiritual thoughts, we may think we are holier than we actually are when in fact we have not carried out the word of God.

So I invite you after listening to the word of God in mass or after your reflections to please make a resolution to carry out that message in some small way. St. Francis de Sales calls this the bouquet which we have gathered from the beautiful garden of our reflections. So the challenge today is to do at least one good act consciously.

Imagine if carried out the word of God everyday! 365 times a year, 365 different actions, 365 different changes in attitude! The word of God would not be foreign to us; in fact, this is how the Word becomes flesh in our lives!

In the early 4th century, St. Euplus was tortured and flogged for having a copy of the scriptures. When he was asked if he had any other copies he replied: they are within me.

May the word of God dwell so richly in you that they become, not just part of you, but become flesh in you so that when our Lord comes again he may say: I know where you are from. Come into my Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.