

With Compliments of the Author

Homily for Easter 3
April 15, 2018

There was once a little girl who wanted to give her grandmother a very special gift. She bought a beautiful Bible, but decided that she needed to write something special in it. She looked through some of her father's books, and in one of his favorite books she found an inscription she liked that she copied into the Bible. When the grandmother opened the Bible, she opened the front cover and there read, "To Granny, with the compliments of the Author."

St Peter in today's reading from Acts declares something more about the Author of Granny's Bible. He is the most remarkable author of all because he is the Author of Life. What does an author do? An author is someone who has the authority to create characters in a story as he or she shapes the narrative development chapter by chapter. Jesus is the author par-excellence for he alone can shape the story that is Life!

The word used for author in Greek literally means someone who paves the pathway for others, who is the originator, who leads the way. He is the one who has *authority*. The New Testament makes it clear because of Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead, he is the author of life. His Resurrected body points to the kind of Body we will have in the Resurrection thereby making him the one who does pave the pathway that he wants all to walk along. That the pathway is open to all, is made clear when we consider those to whom Peter was speaking. Remember the first Pope was addressing those who had been responsible for Jesus' death. Now one might think his words would be filled with invective and denunciation. But this isn't the tone at all. Hear again the generosity of our patron saint's grace-filled words:

But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you,¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life. And now, I know, friends that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

Did you hear that? He called those complicit in Jesus' death "friends". How is that possible?

It is due to what had happened in Peter's own life. Peter's denial led to his weeping with sorrow for his cowardice. There was no time in his life when he felt greater desolation than on the Eve of the Crucifixion. Jesus had anticipated both Peter's denial and restoration when in Luke 22 he stated at the Last Supper:

***"Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat,³² but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."*¹**

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Lk 22:31–32). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

On the night of Easter that turning back began for Peter and not only would he strengthen his brothers but those who had been Jesus enemies, Peter's-declared "friends".

Remember the two on the Road to Emmaus had returned with the news of the Resurrected Jesus. What he had said to them, Jesus then proclaimed to Peter and the others gathered in the Upper Room, where three nights earlier he had instituted the Eucharist. Now here Jesus is resurrected and Luke tells us he said to the assembly:

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures

In other words, Jesus now did in the Upper Room what he had done on the Road to Emmaus, opened their minds to see how all of the Hebrew Scriptures could only be understood in light of Jesus Christ. The whole of the Bible with compliments of the author, Jesus, who's Resurrection led Peter to declare:

he is not just any author but the author of life.

Peter was beginning to understand how the whole of Scripture only made sense when revealed in the presence of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Peter now had a perspective on the Hebrew Scriptures and on his own life where he could hear Jesus say to him:

"Peace be with you."

With that greeting it was as if Jesus was saying: "Peter your denials and cowardice needn't define you. Peace be with you. All the evil that was directed my way, couldn't defeat me so Peter, peace be with you. You are my friend and as such I want you to declare to all in Jerusalem I don't hold their sin against them either, so peace be with you. They may have been responsible for putting me to death, but I want them to know that I understand, they acted in ignorance. That is why from the Cross I prayed my first word: "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing". They acted in ignorance. They could not see how all the Scripture pointed to me. They did not realize I am the Author of Life, even though I told them so when I said:

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. ⁴⁰ Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. ²

But Peter I will not give up on them. What they could not comprehend when I spoke to them, some will understand when you speak to them. You are to be my witness along with the others in this room. So now that I have bestowed on you my peace, I want you to go to them with that same peace. Tell them they are my friends, invite them to turn to me so that they might discover life, compliments of the author."

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Jn 5:39–40). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

This Peter did. Repeatedly starting in Acts 2, here in Acts 3 and all the way through to Acts 13 when the story shifts from St. Peter to St. Paul. St Paul, who had been Saul. Now if there was an enemy of Jesus when Peter was speaking in Acts 3, here he is. Saul the chief enemy of the early Christian community, turned friend of Jesus and Peter, will take centre stage from Acts 13 to the books conclusion in chapter 28.

Oh speaking of enemies turned friends we are told by St. Luke in Acts 6:7

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.³

These are not Catholic priests. No these are Jewish priests who would have been among the crowd clamoring for Jesus death on Good Friday and were now declaring that Jesus is truly the Author of Life, some few months later.

What had happened in the lives of these people? They had responded to Peter's invitation to:

Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

In Greek the word of Repentance is metanoia. It means to have a change of mind and heart. Peter was able to proclaim this message because he too was one who had learned the way of repentance in his own life. What grace is made available to us when we discover what Peter and the priests who became obedient to the faith now understood. The way of repentance invites us to realize that everything we are experiencing in this present life is to bring us into alignment with the Author of Life.

When we have this kind of change of heart and mind we also discover Jesus is truly our friend and that the Church is the community where we are discerning something the Vatican II Council declared 56 years ago:

“The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come (Rom 5:14), Christ the Lord. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling”.⁴

Our life takes on meaning when we look to the Life that helped Peter to see himself, helped Saul to see himself, the Jerusalem priests to see themselves and so many of us here to see ourselves. This is because in Jesus God entered the history of humanity and, as a man, became an actor in that history, one of the thousands of millions of human beings but at the same time Unique.

³ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition](#). (1993). (Ac 6:7). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

⁴ Catholic Church. (2011). [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium Et Spes](#). In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Unique because not only this book, but even more our lives are compliments of the Author Jesus Christ - the Author of Life!