

## Msgr. Bill's Weekly Letter...

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

BIG day next Sunday — **FUN FEST!** This is a major event for SVdP with great fellowship, friends, fun, fantastic food and fund raising. Make plans to join us Saturday evening for **Spaghetti and Bingo** and all the festivities on Sunday. This is always a great time for the parish. Join your fellow parishioners for a great day.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jesus' parable today leaves little room for doubt. One of the remarkable elements of Jesus' preaching is that he forces us to make a choice. One of the problems of thinking of Jesus as a good moral teacher [he is that], or a philosopher [he is that], or political activist [he is that], a revolutionary [he is that] — **is the fact, that he is God.** Now, there are many men and women who fit those descriptions, none of them claimed to be divine.

In the parable today, Jesus places eternal salvation in the palm of our hands. But there is no magic single statement of creedal items, rather the *wedding garment* of good deeds is necessary. The man is expelled because he was not dressed properly, e.g., the garment of a good life. Jesus forces us to choose a new/different path than mere moral teaching.

There is a branch of theology that emphasizes the most important part of any religion is intuition, feeling or sentiment which determines its real identity as a church. As a discipline, theology [doctrine] and ethics are secondary to religion. Much of this began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even this began about two centuries with the multitudinous breaks from tradition. Martin Luther once wrote, "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly."

This is not to say that sentiment or feeling is not important. It is vitally important for Jesus himself exhibited deep feeling and sentiment. Rather, these feelings and sentiments must be based on truth and the real historical events of Jesus' life.

Our faith must be based on the fact of Jesus' dying and rising from the death is atonement for our sins. He told his disciples to go out to the world, make disciples, baptize (sanctify them) and remind them of all that he taught. Our task today is not to explain Jesus to the world, but rather, present the Gospel of the Good News even when it's hard, demanding and sometimes controversial.

You see, it is not so much that there is power inside of you or me, but God's power and grace can be within us. It is not you or me, but God working in us that can do more than we ever thought possible or imagined (cf. Eph. 3:20). It is the power of Jesus who suffered, died and rose for us.

Our access to this power of God is a submission of our will to his holy will. "Well, how can we know his will?" Of course, we must make him our shepherd. Failure to put him first will derail any hope of walking through the valley of darkness. We will be filled with too much fear even to take the first step into the valley. We will be overwhelmed with anxiety and doubt. We'll start to worry that we don't feel so good about God or ourselves. Then our faith will start to forget that Jesus himself did not always feel good. He prayed for his father to take the trial away, **BUT**, the Father's will was to be done and he would submit if the Father asked him.

It was this very submission that led directly to Jesus' passion, death and Resurrection. We cannot just feel our way through this life into the next. We can't just show up at the banquet not properly dressed in the garment of faith and good works.

Beware of those who have no cross in their churches and are preaching. For, it is by the cross that salvation was accomplished. Jesus promised you and me that we too must carry the cross, suffer with him if we desire to participate in the resurrection of the just. Jesus teaches, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven," but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt. 7:21).

pace – bene, 