

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given on September 13, 2009
Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Liturgical Year B

We meet many people throughout our lives – at school, at work, in church. Of the people we meet, some stay acquaintances and others become friends. Some become close friends. A few become friends for life. They all start as people we meet, and then there are turning points...disagreements to be bridged – or not...challenges to be met – or not...an invitation to go deeper is accepted – or not. This is how we end up with friends – good friends – dear friends. This is how friends become lifelong friends, how couples become spouses, how teachers become mentors.

This is happening in the Gospel too. The disciples have been with Jesus for a while. Some keep moving in, others move out. Some deepen their friendship. It happens by listening, watching, talking, learning. Then they get to a point that is crucial. “Who do people say that I am?” Some say a great teacher, others a great religious figure, still others the best man that ever lived.

In chapter 8 of Mark’s Gospel, the disciples come to a point of going deeper. Jesus is not just a good man, a great teacher, and so forth. He is the Christ – the Messiah – the person the Jewish people were waiting for to restore the nation of Israel to its prominent place in the world. But there is more. The disciples are not just disciples of God’s chosen servant for Israel. They are disciples of God’s Son. Unexpectedly, it will be a Roman soldier at the foot of the cross in Chapter 15 who will declare this: “Truly this man was the Son of God!” We can presume that the experience was life-changing for him.

The disciples’ experience invites us to check and see where we are with Jesus and the place He holds in our lives. As we move from week to week in knowledge and familiarity with Christ, we are changed, not just in what we believe, but who we are and how we act in the world, which is how our faith is ultimately expressed and embodied.

Christ embodies Himself here – God’s Son made human – who becomes food and drink to become one with us and keep us one with Him. In Him, we are nourished to be people who believe in the Son of God, who become His very brothers and sisters, to do His works in the world. By these things will others know us as Christians.