

Dear Friends,

Builders will be familiar with the term “cornerstone” or “keystone.” In building terms, the keystone or cornerstone is what keeps the structure from collapsing. It forms the bedrock and core of the building and the soundness of the whole structure depends on it. In the ruins of many large Middle Eastern cities, despite past earthquakes, one can still find certain ancient buildings standing. This is due to the fact that the keystone was so well placed, and in times when cement and mortar were not in use, this was the main feat of the architecture.

In today’s second reading, we are given a picture of Christ as the keystone, as the foundation of our faith and one who builds a spiritual house for God using “living stones”. As members of the body of Christ, we are those living stones, and Christ is our foundation. Christ is the “precious cornerstone” for us believers and we are “a chosen race”, and “a people set apart”.

Our world is troubled by many things and so are our hearts. Life does not present us with constant joy. Jesus’ words at the beginning of the Gospel offer us comfort. He says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus himself knew what it felt like to be troubled. He knew disillusion and despair. Prior to Jesus’ betrayal, and again in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus uses the word “troubled” to describe how he feels. At these times Jesus is troubled deeply, or as he himself says, his soul is troubled. Even Jesus, the cornerstone of our faith, had to call on the Father in his moments of doubt and struggle. Jesus had to live his faith with the weight of the world bearing down on him, as we ourselves do. Honesty in our relationship with Christ and his Father are vital to keeping the foundation of our lives and our faith secure amid the earthquakes of life. If we seek to follow Christ faithfully, we can be reassured that he understands what life is like for each one of us.

So who is this Jesus we are seeking to follow? As the Gospel relate it, we believe in Jesus, a human being like us who walked the earth; who suffered loss, both of friends and family, during his lifetime; who was a friend of those who were poor and marginalized; a healer of those who were sick; and a person of deep compassion. If this is the Jesus we follow, these realities will be part of our life of discipleship here on earth. Jesus points the way when he says: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Jesus’ “Way” is the way of love and compassion. Jesus’ Truth is that he, the Son of God, is our brother and is alive in our suffering brothers and sisters. The “Life” we are being offered in today’s Gospel is one where we will no longer be troubled, where we will see the Father and inherit eternal life. Jesus has gone to prepare a home for us. In this going is the suggestion that the life we live now is not the fullness of life for which we are destined. There is another, fuller life for those who believe, who love, who offer the goodness of God to others. This life in Christ is one we get glimpses of here on earth when we do the work of God, and find ourselves at one with God’s ways. In moments of joy and union with our God and with one another, we see the promise of this new life which Christ offers to us.

Our readings today offer us an invitation to look at what is key or foundational to our lives. Were you to be asked, what is the most important thing in your life today, how might you respond? It might involve those you love, those you care for and possibly what you own. It may be worth spending some time this week asking how key your faith and your relationship with Christ is to your daily life. If it is key, how do you express this? If Christ is “the Way, the Truth and the Life”, how is that reflected in your life?

Your friend in Jesus
Msgr. Zach