

OCTOBER 6-7

THIS IS WEEK 5 OF OUR MESSAGE SERIES CALLED "BE OPEN to Journey with Jesus"

- We are talking about being OPEN to Jesus Christ
  - o To committing our lives to serving Jesus Christ as his missionary disciples
- The first week we heard about the deaf and mute person
  - o And we spoke about how OPEN are we
    - To a personal encounter with Jesus that can forever change us
      - By bringing us healing and wholeness
- The second week we asked ourselves the question: Who do you say Jesus is?
  - o With the challenge of not just knowing facts about Jesus
    - But really knowing Jesus personally, intimately as a friend
    - And being OPEN to sharing Jesus with others by sharing his Good News
- Then in week 3 we discussed the struggles and challenges of being a follower
  - o And asked ourselves how OPEN are we to being a missionary disciple
    - Knowing that just as with Jesus
      - Being a faithful disciples can lead to ridicule, persecution
        - o Even death
    - But trusting that if we are doing God's will
      - Then we can never go wrong
- And last week we spoke about being OPEN to serving Jesus by serving others
  - o How each one of us has received the Spirit of God through baptism
    - And therefore have been given a share in Jesus' mission
    - We do this by serving our community and more specifically our parish in some form of ministry

THIS WEEK WE ARE SPEAKING ABOUT BEING OPEN TO CHANGE

- We are going to talk about being OPEN to changing our hardened hearts
  - o To looking at what we believe or how we embrace our Catholic faith
    - And asking if there is something missing or something lacking
      - That needs to be changed or view differently
- In some sense, this is what we have been addressing for the past few weeks
  - o Due to the sex abuse and the accountability crisis our church is facing
  - o Because all of us sense there are things that really need to change
    - Things that should have changed the last time we dealt with it
    - And things that we do not have much power to change
      - But known in our hearts that need to be changed
- Today I would ask us to set aside those things that we are powerless to change
  - o At the moment
- And focus instead on ourselves
  - o To look at ourselves in an honest and enlightening way
  - o And invite Jesus to help us Be OPEN to changing ourselves to be more like Jesus

## OUR GOSPEL SPEAKS ABOUT THE HARDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART

- Which could be another way of saying that there is a lack of openness
  - o In the human heart for whatever reason
    - Sometimes by the actions of others
    - Other times by our own fears and misunderstandings
- If we think about it
  - o Having a hardened heart can isolate us from others
    - Keeping us alone or from being able to love another person
      - Maybe even loving God
- The first reading and the Gospel today
  - o Remind us that it is not good to be alone
    - That is why God made us male and female
    - God made us to be complementary to each other
      - He made us to be partners – coworkers with each other’
        - o And ultimately coworkers with God

## IN THE GOSPEL Jesus IS BEING TESTED BY THE PHARISEES

- Today it is about the topic of divorce
  - o But I would like to say the topic could be anything
    - Any teaching or any law, it doesn't matter
  - o The Pharisees were not necessarily concerned about divorce
    - They were more concerned about trying to trip Jesus up
- So my homily today is not about marriage and divorce
  - o Which can be a difficult topic to discuss because it impacts so many us
    - And every one of our families as well
- But the issue I would like to discuss is the hardness of our human hearts
  - o Or just the very fact that there are times we can become stubborn
    - Or close minded, or unwilling to change our ways
  - o And if we are truly honest with ourselves
    - We know this is true for most if not all of us
- Sometimes it is very apparent or obvious to us that we have hardened hearts
  - o Other times it may be pointed out to us by a “friend”
    - Maybe a friend who is taking their lives into their own hands to do it
- I would venture to say the recent climate of our country
  - o Could partly be blamed on those who are closed off to the ideas or views of others
    - The idea that it is either my way or the highway
  - o And not have a willingness to listen, to compromise, to change one's views
    - Which in my opinion is a definite hardening of heart and mind
- But Jesus enters into our world to save us from this hardening or stubbornness
  - o Instead He invites us to conversion of our hearts and changing of our ways
    - To Be OPEN to become more like him

## THE GOOD NEWS TODAY IS EXACTLY THIS

- That God knew in advance, before he created us in the first place

- That this hardness or stubbornness or lack of openness
  - Would enter into our humanity and need to be redeemed
    - That we would need to be saved from it
      - By the grace and mercy God gives us in Jesus Christ
- Precisely because of Jesus's mission
  - Of his coming into our world
    - We do not have to live like this
      - We do not have to be closed off to a radically new way of living
  - We can be opened to changing our beliefs and even our very selves
    - Because Jesus was for a little while
      - Made lower than the angels
        - As we heard in the Letter to the Hebrews
      - He choose to come among us as one of us
        - So that he could show us the way to this new life
  - And so Jesus invites us to share in his heavenly life
    - But it is only possible if
      - We are OPEN to the conversion of our hearts He is offering us

#### THIS WEEKEND IS RESPECT LIFE WEEKEND AS WELL

- It is a time when we are asked to be open to our need
  - To protect and defend all human life
    - Life which is made in God's image and likeness
- These lives we have been given are precious
  - From the very moment we are conceived in our Mother's womb
  - To the last breath that God naturally gives us
    - And every way that lives are lived in between
- Issues of life pretty much cover everything
  - From health care, to immigration, to homelessness to the opioid epidemic
  - These are all issues of life
    - And as Christians we know that Jesus came into the world
      - So that we may have life, and have it to the fullest

#### ALTHOUGH WE MAY NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH THE CHURCH

- On one topic or another
  - For whatever reason
- Today I would ask us to just be OPEN to softening our hearts
  - And therefore maybe changing ourselves
    - To change our ways of thinking or our reaction to differing opinions
- So that we are able to live our lives as Jesus did
  - Responding to his call to conversion of our hearts and minds
    - To the mysterious ways and works of God
    - And truly embracing what it means to be a Christian
      - As a disciple and friend of Jesus Christ