**20th Sunday in Ordinary Time- Cycle C**

August 17/18, 2019

Jer 38: 4-6, 8-10; Heb 12: 1-4; Lk 12: 49-53

How do we make sense of life? Of all that happens to us? For those of us my age and beyond - we Senior Citizens - how do we make sense of all the things that have happened over the last 60, 70, 80 or more years? For those who we might call middle age adults, how do you make sense of all that is happening in your life? For those among us who are in high school or college, how will you make sense of all that will happen to you? And finally for those who are children, how will you make sense of all that you can imagine life to be, all that you dream about?

Are we going to just sit down and try to think it through, like a philosopher when we are old?

Are we going to turn to those who attract our attention for answers, people like our favorite politician or sports hero, or maybe Oprah or Dr. Phil, when we are in adulthood?

Are we going to just try to fit in with our peer group and do what they do and think like they think when we are in school?

How will we understand all that we heard today in our readings?

Running the race; Setting the earth on fire; Enduring opposition; Struggling against sin; Enduring the cross; Shedding blood; Creating division.

All these are very descriptive phrases, action words, words that are frightening perhaps, certainly challenging. All of them are things that have been or will be our experiences if we go the distance and **follow Jesus, embrace Jesus, love Jesus** and do what he asks us to do. But, how do we make sense of the struggles, the uncertainties, the divisions, oppositions and crosses we face when we follow him? This brings us to the whole point today, the central part of it all: We must, as St. Paul said in the Letter to the Hebrews, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He is the answer.

**Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus!**

When we are old we must look back on our lives and see Jesus present even in the times of difficulty.

When we are adults and active in the world we must see Jesus in every event, every accomplishment, and every defeat.

When we are young, in school, and preparing for life, we must see our future through the eyes of faith with Jesus in mind.

As children we must know Jesus is our best friend, our greatest hero, someone very close to us always.

Sometimes, the totality of life, from beginning to end, only makes sense if we keep our gaze upon Jesus; all these things we heard about make sense only if we keep our eyes on him.

How do we gaze upon him? How do we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus? Look to the Eucharist.  It is the Eucharist where we can most specially see him. I have often said to people that often life does not seem to make a lot of sense until I am at Mass, the Eucharist. Sometimes only the Eucharist makes sense, as much of a mystery it may be, because the Eucharist is Jesus with his Church. Sometimes a mystery is more understandable than the facts of life, and this is true when it comes to the Eucharist, a great mystery of our faith. But it is here at Mass where we can focus on Jesus, both in the Sacred Scriptures we hear, and in his Body and Blood, his true and real presence among us. It is at Eucharist, where we must come every week, where we both seek understanding and receive it.

Gaze upon Jesus in your private prayer. We must take time every day to look at him in prayer, gaze upon him, accept him, listen to him, and ask him to help us understand.

Fix your eyes upon Jesus by developing periods of silence and quiet in our noisy world, removing the distractions that keep us from seeing him and hearing him; it is in silence that Jesus speaks most clearly.

I have learned one thing and I share it with you: Without the Eucharist, without some form of daily prayer, without looking for quiet times in my day, I get confused and lost. Only Jesus **in his Church** can make sense of all of life. Only Jesus **in the Church** clarifies the uncertainties. Jesus is the explanation. Jesus is the reason for all of life. Jesus is the answer to all our questions and concerns. We must keep our eyes fixed on him. We must look and listen.

I would like to conclude my homily by reading to you a part of a homily that Pope St. Paul VI gave in 1970.

The more difficult the assignment, the more my love of God spurs me on. I am bound to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Because of him we come to know the God we cannot see. He is the firstborn of all creation; in him all things find their being. Man’s teacher and redeemer, he was born for us, died for us, and for us he rose from the dead.

All things, all history converges in Christ…. He will be the complete fulfillment of our lives and our great happiness for all eternity.

I can never cease to speak of Christ, for he is our truth and our light; he is the way, the truth and the life. He is our bread our source of living water who allays our hunger and satisfies our thirst. He is our shepherd, our leader, our ideal, our comforter and our brother.

He is like us….. he spoke on our behalf; he worked miracles; and he founded a new kingdom: in it the poor are happy; peace is the foundation of a life in common; where the pure in heart and those who mourn are uplifted and comforted; the hungry find justice; sinners are forgiven; and all discover that they are brothers.

….. So once again I repeat his name to you Christians and I proclaim to all men: Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, Lord of a new universe, the great hidden key to human history and the part we play in it. He is the mediator — the bridge if you will — between heaven and earth. Above all, he is the Son of man, more perfect than any man, being also the Son of God, eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary his mother on earth, more blessed than any woman. She is also our mother in the spiritual communion of the mystical body.

Remember: it is Jesus Christ I preach day in and day out. HIs name I would see echo and reecho for all time even to the ends of the earth.

AMEN!!