

As promised at Mass here is a simple reflection on the first sentence of Sunday's Gospel:

-We read: "Jesus withdrew to Galilee", and elsewhere in scripture we read "Jesus withdrew because he knew they wanted to make Him a king."

A few things for deeper reflection:

1.This withdrawal from the people shows a Humility: Jesus empties Himself / Jesus desires detachment from worldly power, and concerns of the ego. It leads to a freedom to focus on the will of the Father and His whole Life's purpose to give it to the Father. What a model for us. The more we detach from material things and concerns, the more free we become.

2.This withdrawal shows us Jesus' ministry and life are directed to the sacrifice of the cross, so we are freed from sin and death / Jesus will allow Nothing to get in the way of this.

He loves you and me this much

But without Him / By Whom we were created / Nothing would have purpose or make sense.

When we follow this model of sacrifice: our lives have purpose and make sense.

-"Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy." The whole story of God's plan for marriage, like the whole story of His creation and redemption, ends with joy.

AND THE SUNDAY HOMILY NOTES:

1st Reading - Isaiah: (Background on Zebulun and Naphtali):

-The two cities are to the north of the Sea of Galilee (Zebulun and Naphtali). They were laid to waste by Syria and, then later, by the Assyrians during Isaiah's time / The people were mistreated and then led away into slavery.

-Capernaum is on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is now Jesus' home base / This area became a mixture of Gentiles and (1/3 Jews) - Those Jews not earlier taken away into slavery and captivity. There are hostilities between the ethnic groups but Jesus comes to restore, to unite, and bring light to a people in darkness.

-The Isaiah and Matthew connection: These people in darkness shall be brought into the light." is One of the many 300+ Messianic Prophecies that Jesus fulfills.

The Sunday Mass Readings show Jesus beginning His Ministry / To bring Light, Order, Healing, and Restoration to these people, and through His Church, us today / Jesus calls the Apostles and then the Disciples / He calls Peter, Andrew,

James and John / And today He calls you and me through His Church, the new Israel.

- The Church continues this healing ministry.**
- Peter is given the keys thus; given the authority to Govern.**
- (The apostles and their successors continue the work of Jesus).**

2nd Reading - 1 Corinthians Governing:

Listening to the Catechism in a Year: from the very beginning of the podcasts / We see how God, through His teachings (Oral and Written Traditions), wants to bring order and unity to His Body / His Church / To our lives / He wants to put us back together again. When you hear people speaking for the church, but what they say doesn't conform to Catholic teaching found in our 2000 years of oral and written tradition, then don't follow them. Follow Jesus and His teachings given through the unity of His Church as found in the Catechism.

Thursday's Mass Gospel:

-"He had cured many and, as a result, those who had diseases were pressing upon him to touch him."

JESUS WAS THAT POPULAR / SOMETHING AMAZING WAS DRAWING THE PEOPLE TO HIM / So much so, at times, Jesus withdrew from them (see above).

Many of us have experienced all types of healing / Where we have lived in darkness but now we are experiencing the light / And acknowledging our sins and Repentance have led many of us to more Freedom from our vices.

- Converts and Adult Reverts (From Darkness to Light / From futility to Hope).**
- Converts to the faith bring (fire and zeal) / But Cradle Catholics (Teach us converts the ancient prayers, saints, and the many Devotions and Traditions of our deep and rich faith.**

In closing:

Imagine if Jesus physically walked right now into our parish.

- We forget He is with us (Through the Sacraments and in the hands of the priests).**

Stay close to the Sacraments / Mass, Eucharist, Confession: Jesus wants to one day make us whole / to heal and put us back together again.

- People seek meaning/ But when we seek happiness and fulfillment through material things and human ideologies / Without Jesus / They, by themselves, will leave us restless.**

**We were created for God / Until we seek meaning by Him who created us for Him /
Seek the one who gives us meaning / The One who fulfills our existence ...**

We will remain unfulfilled and restless

St. Augustine: "The soul is restless until it rests in God."

For those who can be hard on themselves / Think they are hypocrites:

**First: All of us fall / We all sin / We are all a work in progress / Jesus knows this
so He gave us the Sacraments.**

**I am paraphrasing a quote I saw: "We walk into the Confessional with the sins of
Adam, and we walk out (as Jesus) cleansed through the power of Jesus."**

Jesus mentions Repentance: This is another good quote:

**"Repentance stems from a firm hope that we are not defined by our failures. "God
willingly forgets that we have done wrong; God is ready to count our repentance
as innocence. There is a reality present before us that is greater than our
sinfulness. This reality, this kingdom, is Jesus himself: God with us. "We enter
into heaven to the extent that we go to Jesus Christ and enter into him" (Pope
Benedict XVI).**

As an aside: From an article I read:

**Notes: If you doubt that miracles of physical healing still take place in the life of
the Church, I invite you to read Craig Keener's book *Miracles*. The Bible knows
that sin has done tremendous damage to us, and anyone involved in pastoral
ministry knows what this looks like: broken minds, divided hearts, addicted
passions.**

**Blessings in the not "Ordinary Time" of Jesus' ministry for the Salvation of our
souls. Father Vic Gournas**