

Years ago, actually it is more correct to say decades ago, a Confirmation student asked me in class if the Bible was STILL being written. Unsure as to what he meant by “STILL being written” he continued, “You know, are they still adding more books to it?” I know my answer to him was just as quizzical as his question when I told him “Yes, and no.” I went on to explain to the class, “Yes, in that it is a living document, being written countless times on men’s hearts; it is the word of God spoken to man over 3000 years ago, and still spoken in our hearts today. And “No”, the 73 books that are in the Bible are all that are there, or ever will be.”

You might be asking yourself, “Why is this opening paragraph used for this weekend’s readings?” A good question, even as I posed it to myself. And the best answer I can come up with is, “Has anything really changed in the past 3000 years since God has been whispering in the ears of mankind?” Better put, have our ATTITUDES toward one another changed that much in over 3000 years? From my own observations in my own short lifetime I can answer that question with an absolute truth – “No!” In all the leaps and strides man (and WOMAN – I only use the masculine form for both) has made over the centuries in travel, science, technology, we have made little to no advance in our being able to get along with one another, be it in family, neighbors, or international relationships. When it comes to loving God and our neighbor we are pretty heavy in lip service yet lacking in action.

In the reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah God laments the loss of His flock and lays the blame on those who shepherd His people. When WE hear this, we know it doesn’t take someone with a military or business background to know how to correct this problem, and heaven knows, God is wiser than we. And the answer is, “I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them.” (Jer 23:4a) Be it by a lack of catechesis, or mislead catechesis, too many of the flock known as the Catholic Church in America is today scattered, broken, wandering about, not so much seeking God, but more so looking for a replacement god, a god of the secular-type, a god of man’s own making. The scandalous acts of the leaders that rocked the ancient biblical world and confused the faithful are not so much different or worse than they are today. The big difference today is that pedophilia and sexual misconduct within the clergy is not just news (remember - blood and sex sells), it fosters confusion among the people as to what is right and wrong.

In today’s gospel Jesus, who wanted to spend some quiet time with his returning disciples who had much to tell him about their recent journeys in healing the sick, could not ignore the throngs of people who sought him out and waited along the shore for him to land. No, “his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.” (Mk 6:34) These people hurried away from their shepherds, their leaders, those stumbling blocks to the truth, to find someone, THE ONE, to feed them the love of God, to set them again on the path to the Father.

Sin and the occasions to sin have been and always will be with us. The Bible gives us hints into how things were. Recorded History too points out how things were and even reasonings as to why stuff happens. In all of time two things have not changed: much of mankind is self-centered in his own agenda; God STILL loves us, and His love is imprinted in the DNA of each and every one us. Read the Word of God and let Him write His truth in your heart.

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