

14th Sunday Ordinary Time

Some of you will remember the British rock band The Who, some of you may remember them too well, but they had a hit song titled “Who are you?”

That was pretty much the lyrics of entire song asking who are you?

The song writer is really having a conversation with himself.

Asking the age old question who am I and why am I here what is my purpose in life?

If you are a fan of superheroes Batman offers one answer to the question "who are you?"

Batman is having an intense conversation with Rachel on the roof of some tall building in Gotham City. She is about to figure out that the true identity of Batman, is Bruce Wayne, her childhood friend.

Rachael says to him – “Is it you? Are you Batman?”

He responds, “It's not what's inside of me but what I do that defines me.”

What Batman "does" is fight the bad guys, with really cool stuff. One of the reasons people like Batman so much is that he is the one super hero who doesn't have any superhuman powers, he just uses the smarts God gave him, and a huge inheritance, to fight crime. But does that really answer the question, who are you? Whether you are Batman, Bruce Wayne, or the Joker. Is it really what you do that defines who you are?

I heard a man ask a firefighter onetime, “What's your second job?” Firefighters will often have a side business on their days off and the man was hoping to get a reference for a work project.

The Firefighter answered, “My first job is my family, my second job is being a firefighter.”

This firefighter understood that doing is different from being.

My dad had a hard time saying no to volunteering his time in church and community so when he would complain to my mom about feeling stretched too thin she would ask him, well are you a human being or a human doing?

Sometimes our identity gets enslaved to what we do rather than liberating us in who we are.

Our parish motto is Building, Bridging and Being

It's about Growing our faith by connecting with Christ. We aren't building, bridging and doing, because the Christian doesn't get their super powers from what they have or what they do but from who they are, or rather whose they are. We belong to Christ. We are sons of God. We are daughters of light.

A pastor at a ministerial alliance meeting once wore a t-shirt that said, I am a pastor; what super powers do you have? I thought to myself, I can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. But this isn't a competition. The priest is not who he is because of what he does, but because of what Christ does through him.

For example:

If the priest is in a state of sin when he is administering a Sacrament, is it a valid Sacrament? If you were baptized or married by a priest who was in a state of sin was your Sacrament valid? Yes, it was. If the priest is not in a state of grace when he calls down the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the body and blood, it is still a valid and licit mass. It's not what the priest does, it's what Christ does through him. That's who we are as Christians. Anything good that we "do" comes from Christ, anything bad that we "do" can be redeemed by Christ. The reason we matter does not depend on our achievements or else a lot of un-achieving people would be nobodies.

Like little baby Charlie Gard who's been in the news a lot lately. The baby with a rare disease in a British hospital who wants to remove him from life support and withhold medical treatment against his parents' wishes. Charlie Gard is useless by society's definition, because he can't "do" anything, all little Charlie can do is be a child of God. That is who he is. By his very being he has value and self-worth. His very being has enriched the lives of his parents and brought worldwide attention once again to the "disposables", who are those people that can still contribute to society by simply being in it. It is always human pride and ignorance that says weak or defective people are a drain on society. Actually they make us better because they remind us of our own weaknesses and dependence on God.

We don't like that because we all want to be strong, independent superheroes.

Gospel

Matthew 11:25–30

At that time Jesus exclaimed:

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones.”

The wise and learned are you and me when we think we are large and in charge. But Jesus says we are supposed to be like the little ones. Because children are completely dependent on their parents or guardians. Little ones trust that they will get what they need when they need it. We get so frustrated and depressed or angry when we can't control people or situations. That's our pride. Trying to deal with life is hard and we aren't supposed to pretend that we can deal with it by ourselves. St. Paul calls that, living in the flesh.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:9, 11–13

Brothers and sisters:

You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit. the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead and dwells in you. We are not slaves to the flesh, i.e. Our human frailty and weakness that embarrasses us because we can't do things the way we wish we could or should, that is stinking thinking as they say, it is not our master. That would be living according to the flesh. If you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So how does this work practically? How do I deal with my bad finances or poor health or broken relationship? How do I take off my superhero suit and mask?

Jesus says come to me.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Yesterday was first Friday adoration and the chapel was filled with disciples, all day long, Catholics, who came, like little ones, and sat at the feet of Jesus. It really is that simple but it takes a courageous act of faith to be meek and humble enough to let Jesus help you. What are my burdens? What have I been carrying around by myself all alone? What have I been doing in the flesh that Jesus wants to replace with His Spirit? Before you receive Jesus in the Eucharist today, tell Him that you want His help because you cannot do it on your own. Tell Him you sorry for trying to do it all yourself. Because, it's not about what you do, but what's inside that defines you.