

Homily for the 21st Sun in Ord. "B"
Aug. 22-23, 2009

I used to believe that a crescent moon rocked back and forth at night and had poison tips. I used to believe that the moon could kill little children asleep in their beds, because my oldest brother told me that this was the Truth. So I never slept near a window.

I used to believe that a coat hanger was called a dingerdodder and a propeller was called a flo-lection, because my oldest brother told me this was true, and I trusted him. Imagine my surprise when I went to school for the first time, and found out I was misinformed.

I have since learned that my oldest brother is not always a trust worthy source of information.

I used to believe that anyone who belonged to a union was in league with the devil, and anyone who got a Government loan for college was really stealing from my dad, because that is what my Father told me. But I have come to recognize that my dad sees life from his own particular perspective, sometimes his view on things is not very objective.

But each of us have authorities that we trust and use to guide us and to help us learn what is important and what is true. Once we choose to believe in something, we allow it to affect our schedules and our actions. We will only spend our time, talent and treasure for those things we really believe in.

If we continue to grow and mature those authorities change because we begin to realize that what we once thought was true, isn't true at all. That change can be seen

in the way we live; where we spend our time, where we use our talents, and what we are willing to spend our money on.

Most people want to live lives based on what is true. Most people want to believe only what is true. We feel foolish if we find out we have held on to a falsehood.

It is difficult for us to act on something if we are not 100% certain of its truth. Yet the more confidence we have in an authoritative person, and the more fully we trust them, the more eager we are to accept their word as truth, and invest our time, abilities and resources in that truth.

Jesus knew that some people would not trust him. He knew that it would be difficult for some people to put their faith in the words he spoke. That is why he allowed many of his disciples to leave him, and did not chase after them, or modify his words to make Himself more appealing. Those who could not invest themselves in His teaching or change the way they lived, had to make the choice to leave Him.

But, the words Jesus spoke are the truth. They are not modified by culture. His words, if true are true for all people in all ages. The words Jesus spoke are not simply one perspective of the truth, they are the heart and core of what should be most important to any person's life, death and life after death.

Jesus' words are not colored by mythology, poetry, or shortsightedness like my brothers, my fathers, or any teacher or college professor I've had.

We are asked to choose the Lord or choose another. This is what Joshua presented to the people of Israel in the first reading. ***“If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve, the Gods your fathers***

served beyond the River or the Gods of the Amorites in whose country you are dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord”.

Whether we recognize it or not we make those choices each day. Some people serve other Gods, with the names, Money, Sports, Comfort, or Vacation. They would serve these God’s rather than the Lord. Some of you young people have chosen to serve Gods called fashion, peer pressure, laziness or your own pride, rather than serve the Lord.

Do we have the strength to reconsider these choices and make the choice that Joshua asked of the Israelites? Do we have enough trust and faith to say with him, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”?

Some truths don’t matter very much. I don’t care very much whether or not Richard Nixon knew about the Watergate break in. I don’t care very much whether or not President Obama was born in the U.S. In the long run it doesn’t affect the things that are most important to me and the way I live my life.

I **do** care a great deal whether or not the words that Jesus spoke and his teaching comes from God, because the way I live and what I stand for depends on it. If his words are the Truth, then I must make them a part of my life. If his teachings are from God, and if there is a life after death, then I must make the choice to live and act according to those truths, and I will use the tools he gave us to overcome sin in my life.

When I think of all the people who have been an authority to me, and when I think of all the supposed truths they have passed on to me, I must say with the disciples

who stayed with Jesus, “Lord, to whom would I go? *You* have the words of eternal life.”

That same challenge is put into our laps again today. Will you put your faith in Jesus and will you accept him as your Lord and Savior? Or will you put your faith and trust in other Gods and in other people?

If you choose to follow Jesus, then the words he speaks and the truth he teaches must affect the way you live your life and the values you hold.

Try to forgive those who you hold a grudge against. Learn the meaning of your faith. Live a moral life. Be generous to the poor. Be an example to your children and to others. Go out of your way to be kind to one another. And take time to pray and read the word of God. The work of living the Gospel must become the most important work of our lives.

If not, If you choose another, than like the other disciples in the Gospel, you must walk away from here.