

## **All Shall Know Me**

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent (Year B)

March 21, 2021

Fr. Tony Davis

In traditional Catholicism, priests are viewed as the men who mediate your relationship with God. They stand in between you and God, bringing your concerns to God and God's concerns to you. This is most clearly seen at mass, when the priest acts in the person of Christ to consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. For much of history, this understanding has worked very well. It is not entirely theologically accurate, though.

In our First Reading today, the prophet Jeremiah tells us that God doesn't just want to establish a relationship with a few individuals or a few official representatives of the group, but with the entire people: 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' Implied in this future New Covenant is that everyone will have a direct relationship with God because God will write the law upon their hearts. Jeremiah scandalously goes so far as to even say, "no longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD." This almost sounds too good to be true. The Good News, though, is that God is readily accessible and available to everyone.

Anytime having a relationship with God is presented to us as something that has to pass through a third party to reach us, we should be suspicious. While it might make us feel more secure when we are dependent on someone else's faith, it is not the covenant God is seeking. God is seeking a covenant with each one of us in our own

hearts. That is why we prayed in the words of the psalm today, 'create in me a clean heart, O God.'

The clergy abuse crisis and its cover up in recent decades is inexcusable. Nonetheless, it is a good reminder that we should have never put all of our faith in other sinful human beings to mediate our relationship with God for us in the first place. Moving through this crisis, perhaps there is a renewed invitation for each one of us to take greater responsibility for our own relationship with God so that when things like this happen, we will remain rooted in God.

All of this is not to say that there isn't a place for the priests of the Church or other leaders to help guide us. We do need others to lead us in our relationship with God, give us the sacraments (especially the Eucharist), maintain the unity of the church, and keep us from becoming rugged individualists. But we must always remember that they are meant to help facilitate our relationship with God, not replace our relationship with God. God wants a relationship directly with you!

*In the New Covenant, God is to be known directly by all.*

Do I try to know God for myself? Is my faith too tied up to someone else's faith? Do I put obstacles between other people and God?

As people of the New Covenant, we believe that God is already known by all, from least to greatest, whether they realize it or not. Our job is to simply help them discover that truth for themselves.