

Saturday, May 30, 2020; Seventh Week of Easter

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Psalm 10(11):4-5, 7; John 21:20-25

“What about him, Lord?...You are to follow me.”

This last episode in John’s gospel is often seen as depicting rivalry/jealousy and Jesus’ reaction with a rebuke. But, a closer look at the gospel reveals that Peter’s question was probably motivated by genuine love; the desire to preserve true friendship. Both disciples were among the Jesus’ first followers in John 1. That Peter had a good rapport with the Beloved Disciple is demonstrated at the Last Supper, at Jesus’ trial and when Mary Magdalene broke the news of Jesus’ empty tomb. They had been together and worked together. Peter must have already felt a certain pain of separation as Jesus revealed his fate to him without mentioning his friend.

How people have such lasting friendships in their lives? Cherish them. An important point in that episode though was to dismiss the rumor that Jesus said that the Beloved Disciple would not die, because he did die. Yet, Jesus’ instruction to Peter cannot be ignored. For the third time, Jesus calls Peter to follow. That is our business. We are often distracted, like Peter, by many other attractions. Jesus makes the same demand of us: “you are to follow me.” Stop looking sideways. Stay focused.

Spirit of love and service; Abide with us. Amen.

Fr. Maurice