

Sunday, August 22, 2021

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Will you say yes to Jesus?

“Jesus then said to the Twelve, ‘Do you also want to leave?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.’”- John 6:67-69

Those who encountered Jesus during His public ministry 2000 years ago had a decision to make...do I follow Him or turn away? Many chose to follow Him because they recognized that He had the words of eternal life. But many also chose to return to their former way of life and no longer accompany Him. Why did they choose the latter? Either because they didn't understand what Jesus was trying to teach them, or they found His teachings too difficult and challenging to follow. This was an unfortunate reality

The Savior of the World was right there in their midst, and yet they turned away. Perhaps life seemed to be better for them without Jesus. Maybe it was the pressure of the world, of others telling them that Jesus was not who He said He was, and thus causing them to doubt. Perhaps things were just more comfortable or easier without Jesus challenging them with His preaching and teaching. This sounds familiar today.

People will make up various excuses not to open their hearts to the Lord or to come to Church. They will rationalize or justify why they

don't believe or haven't come back. We must remember that the Church is made up of sinners. Pope Francis has described the Church as a "field hospital" for those who are sick and in need of healing. Most sinners are trying, with the help of God, to more and more become the person that God has created and called them to be. They know the way to the Father, and want to bring others with them. They know the pain of this world, including the stresses and anxiety. But they also know that Christ is with them on the journey.

What will you do today? Will you say yes to Jesus, or will you do like some and return to a life without Jesus? Ask Jesus to be with you in all things. Be courageous today!

- Bishop Gregory Parkes