

**January 17, 2021: ( John 1:35-42) Deacon John Murray**

**So, the other day Elaine and I were down in Shaw's doing some food shopping and there was a couple who I recognized from church, this happens quite frequently to the point where Elaine teases in fun me about shopping at Shaw's always takes an extra time because of the conversations with parishioners, but I love it, I love seeing all my buddies from church around town.**

**So we recognize this couple and there was this moment of hesitation, that moment where you are not sure who you are looking at is the person that you know.**

**But it was and so we chatted for a little while, through our masks, and then on our way....**

**With the pandemic, we are all wearing masks...which is a good thing, as we move about in the supermarket, in retail stores, and here in church, but one of the side effects of wearing a mask is that it is difficult to recognize people.**

**Masks are needed for sure...but in a time when we need to be closer... to support each other.... It makes life a little bit challenging.**

**But there is some good news too....because I suspect at times we are saying hello to people who we think we know, but we don't know at all because we don't really recognize them, so we're making new friends.... That's a good thing...**

**But, speaking of recognizing people, there is one person that we should recognize all the time, and he doesn't wear a mask. A person who wants you to see him and to know him and to love him. A person who is always inviting you into a relationship.....and that person is Jesus.**

**John the Baptist recognizes Jesus, he identifies him for us as the Lamb of God and then as the Messiah and immediately two of John's disciples follow Jesus.**

**The pull.... the attraction is there, it is real....and they let it happen.**

**As humans we are attuned to our senses, we see, we smell, we listen, we touch....**

**All of our sensory inclinations lead to intellectual and emotional responses.**

**In the synoptic gospels, it is Jesus who calls out to Andrew and Peter, James and John and tells them they will be fishers of men.**

**In today's gospel from John, it is the two disciples who hear John proclaim.... "Behold the Lamb of God" and they sense something big, this is what they have been waiting for...they drop what they are doing and follow Jesus.**

**They are searching, they are looking for a home, We hear the exchange...."Where are you staying...and Jesus responds.... "come and you will see". Is Jesus staying at someone's home, or an inn....Is it a home in a physical sense?**

**Yes... possibly, but more so, it is a home in a spiritual way. Because Jesus invites them to his home...and where is Jesus home? It is with God. Jesus is always with God...and we too are invited to Jesus home, to be with him....for this is paramount in Jesus teaching as we will hear throughout John's gospel.**

*“I am the True Vine and my Father is the vine grower....remain in me, as I remain in you. For just as a vine cannot bear fruit unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.”*

*“So if you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.” JN 15:1, 4, 7*

**How awesome is that? How awesome is Jesus!! Remain in me and you will always have a home!!**

**We too are invited to Jesus's home, into his sacred heart into a relationship with him.**

**This is what the disciples were searching for and what we are always searching for too, for from the moment of our birth, we are always pointed to Jesus. To recognize him, to be closer to him in a meaningful, loving relationship.**

**And so as we reflect on our readings this morning, we ask ourselves when and where do we see Jesus in our life? Do we recognize him, do we hear him speak to us, are we listening, paying attention to him?**

**Or are we wearing a mask and hoping he doesn't see us?  
Hiding from him.**

**Yes, it is possible to live in the shadows or darkness, but that is not where Jesus wants us to dwell. Why would we want to do that? Why have that feeling of looking over your shoulder to see if you are being watched....doing something that feels awkward or out of sorts.....That's what it feels like when we are not in sync with Jesus.**

**My dad had an expression when as kids we did something as that we were not supposed to do, he would say, "you're not fooling me, you're only fooling yourself."**

**Jesus wants to be in our life, so let's let him in and stop fooling ourselves!!**

**Just as St. Paul tells the Corinthians to treat your body like a temple, we too are joined with Christ as adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus..... that we are made in the image and likeness of God, that our body is a temple made by God that the Holy Spirit is within us.**

**Yes, we are a tabernacle of the Lord.**

**Just as Jesus is in the tabernacle right now, we too are a place where Jesus lives. And being that tabernacle, we should honor and respect and love Jesus who lives in us.**

**And we do this by serving Jesus....just as Samuel can't sleep because God is calling him....and then we hear his response to God, "I am here Lord.... your servant is listening".**

**I go back to my original point, that it is time to take off our mask for Jesus, to recognize him and to welcome him into our life.**

**To realize that Jesus is the center of our life and he is everywhere....we just need to use our senses to feel his love.**

**Be patient and kind, hold the door for the next person in line, at Shaw's greet people with a smile, with a cheerful hello.**

**When there is disagreement, forgive and be considerate.**

**We are all in this pandemic together, suffering in different ways, enduring stress and anxiety, let us offer it up to God and ask Jesus for help, to live in his home, his heart. To remain with him.**

**Let us be disciples of Jesus in our thoughts, words and deeds, today and every day of our life.**