

THE STONE REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE

When I was a lad of nine or ten, my older brother Mike was 12 or 13. I remember one day that there was a single piece of cake left that both of us had been eyeing up and wanted to devour. We dare not just grab it and eat it for there would be long term negative consequences for such a move. We approached our mom each asking for the piece of cake. “Why don’t you split it,” she asked. Neither of us was interested in such a bargain but sensed we would have to settle for that. But who would cut the piece of cake n half? And who would get to pick first the piece he desired? My mother told my brother Michael to cut the cake evenly but that I would get to choose the piece I wanted. Never had a surgeon been more precise with scalpel in hand than my brother was with that cutting knife. Those two pieces were so equal that it no longer mattered which piece was taken.

My mother was channeling her inner Solomon. You cut. You choose. Fairness. Really important. To treat each person fairly. To treat each situation fairly. Not necessarily equally but with proper respect. And in each case--despite past failures, faults, lapses, selfishness or even sin—each of us was treated with such fairness. Because of that approach—and it was both my mother and my father’s approach—there was more harmony in our family. It was a key dimension of family life. The keystone for our family. The foundation stone upon which our family relationships were built. A true cornerstone. But not a stone. It was more a way of acting. A way of being. A way of living.

And then, we hear in the second letter of Peter today that “God is laying a cornerstone, chosen and precious, in Zion.” Such a stone that even though “The builders rejected it, this stone has become the cornerstone.” My friends, a cornerstone is the stone which is placed in such a way that two walls come together and this stone serves to connect the two walls. It is a point of union.

Jesus is such a cornerstone. Not between two walls but between God and man, between the Father and all humanity. Jesus can do this, can be this precisely because he is divine and human. He comes from God and yet is one of us. He is of God, “begotten, not made, one in being with the Father, through him all things were made.” Is there one who truly reveals God to us humans? Is there such a person who comes from God and yet is equally one of us? Who actually is God? Yes. There is. He is Jesus. Called the Christ. That is what we believe.

Jesus is the divine dimension, the divine element in our human life—unchanging, reliable, faithful, loving, true (the Truth)—the true foundation stone for us humans. The real cornerstone. In the original creation, man is described as giving in to sin, not trusting what God has set up, not obeying what God had asked.

Woman is depicted as being deceived by the serpent and man is depicted as surrendering to her offer despite what God had commanded.

In the original creation the foundation of that creation was man/Adam. In the new creation there is a new foundation. It is woman/Mary. Her offspring, conceived in her of the Holy Spirit of God, is the one we call Jesus. In the person of Jesus two Testaments are joined together—the Old Testament and the New Testament. The “Sinful No” of Adam and Eve is replaced by the “Grace-filled Yes” of Mary and Jesus. With this woman this man there is a new foundation. A new cornerstone. There is a new way of being. A new way of acting.

And this new way of being, this new way of acting is not way beyond us, beyond our ability to grasp or live. It is as simple and available as the interaction of a mother with her two sons in the decision making process of how to divide a piece of cake. It actually is as easy as that. A piece of cake. If we want it. If we really want it. If we give ourselves to it. If we open ourselves to that same grace. My friends, we cannot refuse such a request from the divine Son of God. The Lord bids us to let him enter into our lives. To allow his way to hold sway in our lives. And once we do then we will begin to live his way. Abide in his truth. What will happen then? We will become alive. It will transform the way we are. And then we will begin to lend a helping hand to those around us, our family members, loved ones, friends, neighbors and co-workers. The new foundation is in this divine forgiveness, divine love, divine respect for each of us.

Then we start to become new cornerstones but living stones—of flesh and blood—for the Body of Christ that the Father is creating anew. Not heavy crushing stones but simple living stones that each of us can become. On this Mothers’ Day we ask that our Lord bless our mothers as He has blessed his own by making them the living cornerstones in our families, as fundamental parts of the new creation.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.