

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“When Jesus was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.”

John 2: 24-25

Please reread the passage above and ask yourself if you ever remember hearing or reading that passage before. It sounded very new to me even though I have been reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for more than half a century. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them. Precisely because he knew them, it seems. Sometimes in my discussion with Catholics and others about Jesus and his way of life I sense that some believe that Jesus was just way too much of an idealist. “Love your enemy. Do good to those who harm you.” Really? Doesn’t Jesus understand what a lot of people are like?

Actually, I think he not only knew what a lot of people are like, he knew what everyone is like deep down in certain areas of their soul. He surely knows every nook and cranny in my soul. He knows the dark places where I try to hide and where my fears find cover and my doubts spew their worries from places I cannot see. Jesus knew all about those dimensions of the human heart and psyche. That is why he came to teach what he did but it is also why he did not trust himself, willy-nilly, to anybody and everybody who came down the pike. Nor did he share the deeper aspects of his mission with everyone. Thus, the use of parables and stories to tease people into going deeper or allowing some to just skim the surface of life—their choice always.

But what is clear is that Jesus definitely “gets” it. He gets the way people are at times in this life. You cannot end up on the cross, you cannot do all that he did to avoid being handed over into the clutches of evil men before his hour had come, and not know which side is up and which side is down. And Jesus was not only street smart, he was genuinely smart. He was way ahead of all his adversaries. If he had not allowed himself to be handed over, I doubt anyone would have been able to outwit him. But when it was time he fulfilled his destiny. He gave himself up to death—so as to remove its sting. On purpose. Yes, he knew all about our human nature. Do you believe that? That is the question of the week.