

Homily120521

TELL THEM ABOUT ME THEY MUST KNOW

The Chosen. Have you heard about The Chosen? Some of you may have. Some may not. The Chosen is a series of thirty-minute long presentations depicting the life and ministry of Jesus. It is independently funded by the people who have seen the films and want them to continue. Forty Million dollars raised so far for the 16 completed videos and the one presently being filmed. In my judgment they are the best and most realistic depictions of Jesus and his apostles and their ministry I have ever viewed. I am a big fan. There is nothing I have seen that is not in complete conformity with what you and I believe about Jesus but these presentations make him come alive in very down-to-earth ways.

There is a scene where Mary Magdalen meets the Pharisee Nicodemus who came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus has heard about Mary Magdalen by reputation, a woman in the grip of her own demons, out of control. Not a good reputation. And yet when he meets her she is not at all out of control. She is gentle and deferential and humble. Not at all like what he expected. Nicodemus asks her about this. Mary Magdalen says: That was who I was—then. What you see before me is who I am—now. The difference between the two, she asks? Jesus. He is the One. He is the One who makes the difference. It is a very believable scene. The Chosen is for adults. Kids will surely get something out of it but it is really for adult viewers. It is very compelling.

On Wednesday, my brother and I went to see The Chosen: Christmas special at the Regal Cinema in Doylestown. It was very well done. There was a lot of Christmas music from excellent musicians on the set of the film. There were testimonials from the performers about their own relationship with Jesus. Their own faith. There was also a new film about the birth of Jesus. Again. Very well done. Before the presentation there were three simple lines that describe the rationale behind The Chosen. The first is from Jesus himself: Come and See. The second was Go tell them about me. The third. They must know. We are now the messengers. It is our turn to tell others about Jesus.

That is precisely what John the Baptist did. He pointed to Jesus. He prepared people for the coming of Jesus. And then he decreased so that Jesus could increase. John the Baptist had a simple role in God's plan. Help others to get to Jesus. Help others to get there. Make the winding ways straight. Make the rough ways, smooth. Fill in the valleys; level the hills. Find a way to help them find THE Way.

All of the above came to me as I was preparing my homily. What came to me is this. This is precisely what I do. This is why I am here. This is why I have been sent to you. To tell you about Jesus. To help you believe in Jesus. To celebrate his life, his love, his care. To call forth from you the Holy Spirit poured out upon you in Baptism and in Confirmation. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers the priest to be able to call forth the Lord Jesus, to summon him to be with us precisely here in Eucharist.

As I reflected upon this simple task. It became clearer to me how necessary it is and how awesome it is. It is also very humbling that the Lord would choose me to be the one to do this for you. I am very glad He did but it is still very humbling and there are moments when I feel very inadequate to the task or unworthy to be the one. It is most definitely an honor. A privilege. A great gift. A gift which keeps on giving—to you and to me.

Come and see. Go tell them about me. They must know. But why? Because we cannot really live without Jesus in our lives. Jesus makes all the difference. Just as Mary Magdalen said: Between that Mary and this Mary, Jesus makes all the difference. We need what Jesus does. We need who Jesus is. He forgives. He is life itself. He is suffering. He is servant. He is holy. He is risen. He IS the way.

My friends, we are in the Advent season. Our focus on Jesus must be restored. He is the reason for this blessed season. Let us decide that we will come to Eucharist, come to Church this Christmas no matter what. It has been a long dry spell for many. Let us put aside our fears. Let us choose to gather with him on his feast day. After all, we too are the chosen.

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