

Sept. 20-21, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

Next weekend you will have the chance to get ready for Christmas. We will have Holy Land Olive Wood Art for sale in the church entry. As you can imagine the situation of the Christian population in the Holy Land is getting worse all the time. This is a way we can help.

As things around the world get more and more stressful there are more people who struggle to make sense of life. I mentally picture lines at psychologist's offices, with hundreds of people hoping to find answers. For some people I am sure that helps but the reality is that the real answer is not something of this world. In the Gospel of John, in Chapter 3, Jesus meets Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews and a Pharisee. Nicodemus can't be seen as asking stupid questions in front of a crowd so he tracks down Jesus at night when the crowds are gone and few people will see him. Most of us can identify with that. But then he says: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." Nicodemus is accurately recognizing that it is not natural to walk on water, it is supernatural.

Think about what it means to do that. You either have to make yourself lighter than a bug, or make the water as dense as wood or defy the laws of gravity. We don't have the ability to do any of that, but Jesus could so he must come from the one who made the laws of nature and so can by-pass them. After some marvelous conversation, that I really suggest you look up and read, Jesus says, "Amen, Amen I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit."

As we face the problems of this world we are facing the dangers of the flesh, viruses that can kill us all, terrorists who want to destroy anyone who does not think like them, a multi-billion dollar industry getting people addicted to illegal drugs, and a multi-trillion dollar pornography industry that is warping the very nature of our culture and how we view right and wrong. These are all things that scare us because they can get us killed or make our lives on earth a living hell. What Jesus is offering Nicodemus and us is an alternative.

We have a choice of how we are going to live in this world. Are we going to hold on to it for dear life? Or are we going to live in it as a way to prepare ourselves for the world of the spirit? This earth is not heaven but the Kingdom of God is here, but not in its fullness. That is what we need to hold on to. Jesus would be asking most of us right now, what is the worst thing that can happen to you? And we would probably pick one of the above mentioned things and explain how it was going to kill us. Do we know what His answer to that would be? Lk. 12:4: I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna..." It is the spiritual life that we need to put our primary focus in. Are we right with God? Do we do what He tells us or do we tell Him what to do? I hear so many people talking about how Jesus would allow this or that, but I can't ever find out from them where he said those things.

At that point I usually go back to my favorite story about the guy who told me he didn't need to go to Mass because he talked to God when he was out fishing. A couple weeks later he was pulling his boat, with his pickup, past the church while Mass was going on, as he headed off to go fishing. His trailer hitch broke and the boat was destroyed just across the road from the church. God was trying to tell him something. I wonder if God is trying to tell any of you anything?

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank