

Homily. 4th Sunday of Easter. Year. B. 20/21 April 2024.

Peter tells us that Jesus was the stone rejected by the builders which has proved to be the keystone, the one who locks and holds everything in place. In his homily, he adds these words; For of all the names in the world given to people, the name of Jesus Christ is the only one by which we can be saved. This is the witness of faith, for it's only through faith in Jesus the Lord that Peter, ourselves or anyone can come to this belief.

St. John makes a similar point, albeit in different words, when he insists that it's God's lavish love for us in Jesus, proved by what he said and did, that frees us to become God's sons and daughters. He said that we are already God's children, God's family, through our acceptance of God's loving initiative offered at no cost to us, for Jesus has paid the price for our liberty. If we take this offer up, make it our own by growing in God's loving then we are saved from the dark and destructive powers working within us. As for our future, John teaches that when it is revealed we will be like Christ because we will finally see him as he really and truly is.

This is powerful, heady stuff for us to take in. We must, however, make the effort to do so because it's the facts of our faith and the substance of our salvation in Jesus Christ that's being talked about here. Knowing what this means, welcoming this saving grace-gift and then living it daily with God's help affects everything we say and do and who we are in the world.

In more homely terms Jesus offers us the image of the model Good Shepherd who knows us by name, is always with us protecting and guiding our journey, a shepherd who is willing to give up everything for

our benefit without costing us a cent. In him, God's lavish love becomes visible and real to us. Through him we are saved from lies, threats and confusion and by him we come to realise our true identity and call in life.

Once we have our own St. Peter moment, accepting that Jesus is our keystone; when we say Yes to God's love and move that loving to the centre of our thinking and doing, it's then that we become Christians ready to discern and accept whatever God is calling us to become. This is what we call our 'vocation' our principal way of putting our faith into action, our personal way to let Christ incarnate himself in us today. No one can tell us what this way will be, what our vocation and call is, but other faithful people can help us to find this way for ourselves. What we've got to remember is that it starts and ends with listening to Jesus voice, accepting him as our saviour and the life and the world and letting the love of God that he is and gives us take root in our hearts and souls.

In our times we have many 'hired for pay' shepherds around without any real care or love about what's for our best. All of them are busy spruiking their plans for us, touting their own secret elixir of wisdom and truth for our lives without actually knowing us at all. Lots of people, far too many, end up following them and the consequences of this are everywhere to be seen, heard and felt. Instead, we Christians have something and someone else to listen to, Jesus our Good Shepherd who gives his all of us. May we always choose to pay attention to him, for he's the only one leading us to the springs of life giving water flowing for the heart of God.