

6th Sunday of Easter “Faith is better than fame”

Fr. Frank Schuster

A little questionnaire: How many of you can tell me who are the last five academy award winners for best actress? How 'bout best actor? Here is an easier one. How many of you can tell me who the Pope was in the year 1200? How many of you can tell me who are the last five Nobel Peace Prize winners for achievements in medicine? All of these people are at the top of their fields and have justly earned their accolades. How interesting it is that after the applause has died out how few remember their names?

Let me ask some different questions. How many of you can name an influential teacher in your life? How many of you can name a friend who encouraged you at an important time? How many of you can name family members who love you? The people who love us are the ones who remember us. The people we love we remember forever. So does God. So does God. Don't get me wrong, I don't have anything against fame. It just that fame is fleeting. Faith, hope, and love lasts forever. Why?

God is love, that's First John chapter 4:16. We are made in the image and likeness of this God who is love, that's Genesis 1:26-27. What are we called to do? Like we have in the Gospel reading today, love. Love however is commonly misunderstood though, isn't it? St. Paul in 1st Corinthians 13 gives us a good look at what true love looks like. Love is patient. Love is kind, it is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick tempered, it doesn't brood over injury, and it does not rejoice over wrong doing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails.

The perfect icon of love, of course, is the cross. Love looks like Jesus who died for us while we were still sinners. God did this for us because he loves us more than we love ourselves, even those we have difficulty with and do not love as we should. Love looks like the Eucharist. We will have about forty five kids receiving their first communion next weekend. How about that? Isn't that wonderful? Yes, receiving the Eucharist is to receive God's unconditional love for us. God becomes part of us, really and truly! After Mass, we exit our parking lot and enter into the world with this new reality, becoming emissaries of Christ to the world. This, my friends, is what we are about because God has truly privileged us to gather around this altar.

And so, here is another question, who here can list their entire family tree from memory going back three centuries? Some people can! I am impressed by these people. The truth is, very few people can do this. Here is a head scratcher: what does this have to say about how many people will remember us three hundred years from now? I mention this not to be depressing. Rather, I mention this because if we really want our lives to mean something to future generations, I think the far better question is will they know Jesus? Will they know who Jesus Christ is? I say this because I have never met my great, great grandparents, but I can say I know them because their faith in Jesus and a number of family

traditions that have been handed down to me. I have never met them but I know them, follow? You see, even if (or rather when) future generations forget our names (and they eventually will), future generations will nevertheless know us and be one with us, not because of our achievements but because of our faith, our precious faith, hope and love that we pass along from one generation to the next.

This is why faith is better than fame. Faith is so much better than fame. You see, as a pastor who works with a lot of different people, I find it amazing how hard some people work in life to get recognized and to stand out in the crowd, and then end up failing their family and friends in the process. It is truly tragic, but it seems to happen a lot and it is really sad. All the accolades we work for and all the lists we hope to find our names on. It is good to be reminded once in a while that the Lord is only interested in one list for us, the book of life. This is accomplished by listening and living the Lord's words to us today in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus says, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." My friends, if you ever find yourself wondering what God wants you to do with your life, start there!