

5th Friday of Lent “Evidence for our Faith”
Fr. Frank Schuster
April 3, 2020

Jesus seems a bit exasperated in the Gospel reading, which is unusual for the Gospel of John, and so perhaps I am reading too much into it. However, Jesus is in this long back and forth argument with those gathered. He has revealed to them that he is the Son of God and, of course, that makes him either God himself (and we should be on our knees) or a fraud (in which case, he should be prosecuted), and so this exchange in our Gospel reading feels rather heated to say the least. In this passage, Jesus seems really frustrated that he cannot seem to convince these people of his identity so he points to his works instead, which is to say, judge me by my works. And the signs Jesus performed in the Gospel of John are quite a resume from turning water into wine to bringing Lazarus back from the grave. The works speak to who Jesus is. And, what came to mind for me here were all the times Jesus asked his disciples in the Gospels to judge the tree by its fruits. This in turn inspired me to think of the Letter of James who argued that faith without works is dead.

I mention this because we are very close to the kickoff for Holy Week and the whole drama of our salvation rests on a moment of history. Everything we believe rests on whether this work of God given to us through Jesus in fact really happened. This requires faith, but not an irrational one, for we have all have seen the fruits of God’s grace that comes from a relationship with Jesus. Otherwise, we wouldn’t here right now celebrating the sacred mysteries. Nevertheless, if our faith is to have any real meaning, the works we perform must reflect the faith that we follow. And this is no easy task because we are in fact sinners. However, I can’t help but wonder, if anyone were to accuse me of being a Christian, would I stand convicted or would the charges be dismissed for lack of evidence? This is a haunting question, as it should be. I think that this might be a helpful reflection for any of us as we begin Holy Week. God has demonstrated his love for us by giving us his only Son. What are we willing to do to demonstrate our love for God in return?