

7<sup>th</sup> Monday of Ordinary Time “Making the Jump”  
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May 25, 2020

Whenever I run into this Gospel reading I am always a bit entertained. How often do we find ourselves asking God, “Will you please give me a clear answer?” The disciples it would seem wanted clear answers as well, and when they finally got them, they rejoiced. Lord, thank you for speaking plainly and now we believe you are the Son of God. Jesus finds himself shaking his head here because he knows what is going to happen soon. He was going to get arrested and these disciples of his were going to flee in every direction when that happens. Does this make the disciples declaration of Jesus as the Son of God here disingenuous? I don’t think so. It is just that, it is one thing to have clear answers in our head. It is another thing to have the courage to act on those answers. The disciples would gain that courage, after the resurrection. But here at the Last Supper was another story.

The example that came to mind this morning as I was praying about it was when I was a kid, at the public swimming pool. This pool had a normal diving board...and it had a high diving board. Now that high diving board was really high. I wonder if they even could allow them anymore because I imagine they are a liability nightmare. You see, you have to climb up this ladder for what feels like forever, passing through cloud banks as you go. And when you are finally up there, the vertigo is crazy. One false move there and, if you fell, it might not be into the water. It could very well be onto the concrete surrounding the pool. Intellectually in my head, I knew a thousand kids dived into the pool from up there all the time and it was all good. There were lifeguards as well always on the lookout. However, the first two times I thought I had the courage to make that dive, once I got up there, the knowledge in my head wasn’t enough. I now needed enough heart and enough courage to make that jump. As a result, the first two times I climbed up that ladder up into the stratosphere ended up with the shame of climbing down without making the jump. And I remember back then being really frustrated with myself about that. I would watch kid after kid, some younger than me, making that climb and making the jump. I knew in my head it was safe (relatively) but it wasn’t until the third time climbing up there that I finally had the courage to just do it. And I did. And, it was a belly flop. I could hear the kids shaking their heads going “Ooooooooh” when I came up for air. But that didn’t matter. I spent the rest of that day going up there and jumping down. I found a new favorite thing to do.

In our Gospel reading, the disciples have surety in their heads and they thank Jesus for the clear answers. Jesus however knows that the answers we get for our mind is only half of what it means to be his disciple. What the disciples lacked was heart as they would soon be fleeing in every direction. It wouldn’t be until after the resurrection when they receive the Holy Spirit; that their hearts finally connect with their minds. It is only then that they are ready to take the dive and become an Apostle.

You see, I think it is helpful sometimes to consider what our faith is really made of. It is one thing to think in our minds that we are a follower of Jesus. It is another thing to truly be one. Most of us are still working on it. And so, perhaps a good reflection for the day could be: what does that high dive metaphor mean for me when it comes to the practice of the faith? What is it that I know in my mind that I should be doing as a follower of Jesus? Can I ask God for the strength to climb up ladder and make the jump?