

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

Fr. Frank Schuster

A little rhetorical questionnaire: How many of you can tell me who were 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, have made an impact on the world and have justly earned their accolades. How interesting it is though, 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 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. The perfect icon of love, of course, is the cross. Love looks like Jesus who died for us while we were still sinners. Love looks like the Eucharist. Jesus is truly present to us Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Yes, receiving the Eucharist is to receive God's unconditional love for us. In Holy Communion, God becomes part of us, really and truly! And, news flash, this simply can't be accomplished over Vimeo or Zoom. You actually have to be here for that or have Jesus brought to you. In this era of social distancing, the Eucharist is God refusing to be socially distant with you. God wants to be one with you. That is how much he loves you. That is good news.

And so, here is another question, who 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? This has been on my mind lately now that I am being transferred soon to Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Federal way. In three hundred years, maybe a parishioner or two might recognize my face on the wall or in a hologram (there is a scary thought), but they will never have met me in person. And, this is not meant to be a depressing thought. Quite the contrary, 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 is? I say this because I have never met my great, great grandparents, but I can say that I know them because of their faith in Jesus has been handed down to me. I have never met them but I know them, follow? It gives me comfort that if future generations in this parish know Jesus, they will know me well enough. They will know us well enough and what is important to us.

This is why faith is better than fame. Faith is so much better than fame. 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, even if life doesn't always go as planned, the Lord is only interested in one list for us, the Book of Life. This is accomplished by turning our hearts to Jesus and listen to his 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...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!