

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 11, 2024

Let Jesus Light the Way

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

In the middle of the nineteenth century, an English pre-Raphaelite artist, William Holman Hunt, painted a symbolic masterpiece of Jesus Christ called "The Light of the World." This painting depicts Christ holding a lantern as he prepares to knock on a long-neglected, locked door. The door lacks a knob and can only be opened from the inside. This symbolizes that Jesus will knock, but the only way he can enter is if the other side lets him in.

Today, on the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we continue exploring Jesus's Bread of Life discourse. In last week's Gospel, we saw the crowd that followed Jesus being fed through the miracle of the loaves and fish. Now, with only selfish needs in mind, however, they begin to question the validity of his words. Their hearts lack depth in understanding or acceptance. In this Gospel Jesus affirms he is the true bread who has come down from heaven and says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him on the last day." With these words, the crowd's skepticism and arrogance are apparent, and any sense of wonder, awe, and ultimate understanding of Jesus's divinity are marred. Similarly, in our own lives, how many times have we *murmured* and questioned our faith when our worldly needs seem unmet? Do we ignore the knock at the door or fail to hear it because we believe our prayers have gone unheard? Are we so focused on our own selfish notions that we fail to see beyond the surface of things? Is our limited understanding limiting us?

Like the crowd, we are constrained by our biases and small-mindedness, sometimes failing to open our hearts to God when we might need him most. We keep the "door" closed to the Bread of Life, the only gift that can sustain us here on earth and toward eternal life and salvation. Although our paths may be uncertain to us at times, let us consent to open our soul, go to Jesus, and let his light shine upon us.

"If your heart is always closed, faith doesn't enter! Instead God the Father draws us to Jesus; it is we who open or close our hearts. Instead, faith, which is like a seed deep in the heart, blossoms when we let the Father draw us to Jesus, and we 'go to Him' with an open heart, without prejudices; then we recognize in his face the Face of God, and in his words the Word of God, because the Holy Spirit has made us enter into the relationship of love and life between Jesus and God the Father. And there we receive a gift, the gift of the faith. With this attitude of faith, we can understand the meaning of the 'Bread of Life' that Jesus gives us. . . In Jesus, in his 'flesh'—that is, his concrete humanity—is all the love of God, which is the Holy Spirit. Those who let themselves be drawn by this love go to Jesus and go with faith, and receive from Him life, eternal life."—Pope Francis, August 9, 2015

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy