

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

One of the loveliest things for to me is to see young children dressed as their ideals. To see a young girl dressed in her princess dress or a young boy with a sword or helmet or wanting to be a cowboy, there is something to that. It is amazing to see the shamelessness of their actions. A young lady wanting to be a princess or a young man wanting to be heroic. They know it is part of their identity and they are not afraid to go towards it. Somewhere along the way it seems to get lost though and we end up fighting for small scraps of our identity or losing it all together to the point where we don't understand who we are or we have let others define who we are.

Can you imagine the boldness of Jesus in today's Gospel? He is invited to a dinner party and he corrects them. *You guys aren't doing this right. You need to be more humble, and you also need to stop worrying about getting repaid here on earth, focus more on Heaven.* What would you do if your dinner guest started deconstructing your actions and intentions? You probably would be horrified. Why would Jesus do this? Was he simply angry at them for always questioning him? Was he taking the opportunity to seek revenge? I am positive this is not the case. Jesus always acts out of love, even in his anger he acts that way. The more the violation, the more of a powerful, loving response. Love, by the way, is the desire to do what is good for the person.

So, this action of Jesus must have been a loving response to something quite serious. It seems to me that these people had forgotten something that we all forget. That is, that they were the sons and daughters of God. So much of our life we do this - forget who we are. We walk around and identify ourselves by small trifles while holding back our real identity. It would be like if Justin Trudeau introduced himself as Justin the substitute drama teacher, instead of the Prime Minister of Canada. Even more out of place is when we live and act as orphans and fight for scrapes of identity under the table when our Lord has set a place for each of us at His table and paid the ultimate price so we could be there.

I feel like a bit of an idiot actually. Hopefully I am the only one who is like this but I suspect that I am not. I feel like an idiot because for forty years I did not understand the significance of Baptism. I am forty-three now, so I feel it is only for the last three years that I have really scratched the surface of Baptism and the power of the other Sacraments. I will focus on Baptism because it the sacrament of identity and that is what I feel called to talk about it. When we are baptized, we become children of God. I know you might be thinking: *Is that all, Father? Did you sleep through twelve years of Catholic school and eight years of Seminary?* I agree that I slept a lot but I feel that if Catholics knew what happened our lives would be different, we would be more excited about what has happened to us and would live lives that showed the light and life of the world.

An identity is available to us that surpasses anything the world can offer. Insecurity will crumble when we use this grace. Can you imagine a life without insecurity? We are insecure because we don't know who we are. We don't know who we are because we have not heard the One who made us tells us who we are. We are fearful because we don't know and use the grace of our Baptism.

Do you know what kind of money we would save if we simply understood our Baptism? I am sure you are aware, but the way most modern products are sold is by using your insecurity against you. The devil thrives on insecure people because he can easily abuse and deceive them because they don't know who they are and are desperate to find out or to belong to anything. But understanding our Baptism thwarts him and his many close friends in the media.

Let us look at two common lies here: The first is the lie that is told to women, young ladies and girls. *Honey, you're a nice person but you are not beautiful. You could be, you have potential, but you will have to buy our products to be beautiful.* And we line up with cash in hand because we don't know the truth.

This is God's truth. My beloved and precious daughter, you are beautiful. You are beautiful like no other woman is beautiful. You reflect my image and likeness like no other person reflects my image and likeness. Do not waste your time being someone else, let Me show you how to be you. Let Me show you the plan I have for you that only you can do. I can't wait to unlock the gifts and talents you have and to show you how the world is brighter and more beautiful because of you. Each day when I gaze on your beauty My heart is captivated.

What is the common lie men are fed? *Hey you are a nice person but you simply don't have what it takes friend. I am just being honest; you are not like that guy and don't have what that guy has. However, my friend I can sell you what you need because that is what I do. Isn't it nice how I make you feel secure?* I know this is true because I have fallen for this so many times. I remember there was a time that whenever I would do another job I would also buy a new tool. Because I didn't have what it took. Expensive for sure. However, since I have learned what Baptism is, I was able to give up my credit card.

But what is the truth, God's holy truth? My son you are so beloved of mine. I love you and have made you a man like no other man is a man. There is no one like you. You have gifts and talents like no other man has. You reflect my image and likeness like no other person ever has. How proud I am of you. Each time I think of you I rejoice in what I have created. Be not afraid, I have built you to overcome. You are not weak, you represent my strength to the world.

Now we see why Jesus is so in their face in the Gospel because these people forgot who they were and were busy trying to see who was the best part-time drama teacher, when, in fact, they were the sons and daughters of God.

Can you look in the mirror and say: *It is good, I am made in God's image and likeness and you did a great job, God, and I am ready to do your work. ?*

If you say no then you need to learn to use the grace of your Baptism. We do this by asking for grace. *God, what do you think of me?* Each time we feel insecure and fearful. Each time we criticize what God has made and join the world in saying it is not good enough. God will assure you that it is not true and He is happy to get in the face of the world and the devil and tell them

to back the hell off all the way to Hell. This is my daughter, this is my son, and I created them and I declare that what I have made is good.

Each day we should pray to live the grace of our Baptism because it is our way of freedom. If we have damaged our Baptism by sin go to Confession and pray for that grace to go. If we are scared, our Father will help you. "God, help me know who I really am," is a good prayer whenever you feel insecure or fearful or inadequate. Each day we can, as baptized people, say, "I am your son, your daughter. God, help me know that that I am never alone and that you will be with me all day."