



Fr. Matt's Musings

May 12, 2017

Be patient with all, above all with yourself. (St. Francis de Sales)

Throughout the weekdays of Easter, we read from John's gospel. Late in this Easter season, Jesus appears to the disciples, cooks fish for them and has a conversation with Peter. Three times Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Three times Peter says "yes," and three times Jesus responds, "Feed (or Tend) my sheep." The conversation must remind Peter of the three times he denied Jesus before the crucifixion. John tells us that Peter is distraught the third time Jesus asks him, but Jesus will not allow Peter to live in shame or guilt. He invites Peter to channel that energy outward in love instead of inward in unproductive, self-hate.

How many of us have words we would like to take back, actions we would like to change, days we wish we could live over again? At times the memories of these moments can move us inward in regret, guilt and shame. Patience is a virtue to help us accept the human condition of imperfection. It is a gift we can give to one another and one which St. Francis asks us to extend to ourselves.

With Jesus' forgiveness of Peter as our model, we remember that forgiveness does not change the past but can enlarge the future. Let us remember that shame and guilt rob us of the present and reduce the possibilities of a future. Easter tells us that love wins. Let us take part in that victory by accepting forgiveness and choosing to love as our grateful response instead of allowing shame or guilt to rule our hearts.

Live Jesus!

Fr. Matt

frhillyard@olgcv.org

www.olgcv.org

Our Lady of Good Counsel
8601 Wolfrap Road
Vienna, VA 22182

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