

Thirty-second Sunday OT – Year A – 11/12/17

When they asked Gandhi what his message was, he said, **“My life is my message.”**  
St. Francis of Assisi is reported to have said, **“Preach the gospel. Use words if necessary.”**  
The last words of the Buddha to his followers were, **“Be a light unto yourself.”**  
Martin Luther cautioned, **“You are going to die alone. You had better believe alone.”**  
Anyone alive in the 60’s said, **“Walk the talk.”**

The foolish bridesmaids in Jesus’ story come late...and call the Master to open the door.  
He says, **“I tell you, I do not know you.”**

Here is a brief but hard-hitting story:

A man knocks on a door. The voice from the inside says, “Who is it?” The man says, “It is your countryman.” The voice behind the door says, “There is no one here.”

The man wanders for a year, returns to the door, and knocks a second time. The voice from inside says, “Who is it?” The man says, “It is your brother.” The voice behind the door says, “There is no one here.”

The man wanders for a year, returns to the door, and knocks a third time. The voice from inside says, “Who is it?” The man says, “It is you.” The door opens.

How does Christ know us? He knows us when he looks into our face and sees himself.

There is a delicate balance in following Jesus. On the one hand He is Lord and Master. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the fullness in which everything will either fit or be cast aside. Although his disciples may do greater things, those things will be done in communion with Jesus’ Spirit.

On the other hand, worshipping Jesus from afar with extravagant praise and petition is inappropriate. As Fr. Karban often says, “People imitated Jesus long before they worshipped him.” We cannot ride on his coat-tails. We must receive Christ into ourselves as people who receive bread, put it into their mouths and swallow it. Then Christ will be within us so thoroughly that he awakens us to our identity as a child of God. We have to die to ourselves to be alive in Christ. We have all the oil we need.

This balance is difficult to maintain. We must simultaneously say “There is only one Lord and Master” AND “We are to be Christ”. We can’t have one without the other.

But the parable of the ten virgins is very clear about where a prevalent danger lies. We know everything about him except the one thing necessary: we are called to be him. If we take into ourselves his truth so that it becomes our truth, then the door opens.

Let us trim our “lamps”, our lives with the “oil” of Christ’s compassion, generosity and forgiveness so that our light shines so that all can see in us the Christ. Let your light shine!