

# Pastor's Letter

August 25, 2024—21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Church Family,

What makes someone a true disciple of Jesus? Is a real Christian someone who never has questions about the faith? Absolutely not! Jesus often says challenging or puzzling things to his disciples in the Gospels and he wants us think and wrestle with them and yes, even ask questions. A real disciple does not turn their brain off when they enter a church or open a Bible. A real disciple wants to know the truth that Jesus teaches and they will not stop asking questions until they find it. Some Christians are afraid of questions. They think that if they have a difficulty with something Jesus teaches that means their faith is weak. The truth is, the only way our faith will become strong is if we face up to the difficult issues Jesus raises. St. John Henry Newman said, "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt." What matters is how we approach the difficult teachings of Jesus. Do we just give up and walk away, or do we really wrestle with them and allow God the time and space to work in us to help our understanding grow?

This is the question raised in our Gospel reading for today. Jesus has said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you." Some of the people who were following Jesus heard this and thought "This is too weird" and stopped following Jesus. They didn't understand this strange idea and they weren't willing to dig deeper to try to figure it out. They just left. The true disciples, however, stuck it out. They hung with Jesus, even though they too were uncomfortable with what he had said. When Jesus asked if they wanted to leave too Peter answered, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." After being with Jesus for awhile they knew that there was something special about him and they were not going to just give up.

At some point, everyone who follows Jesus is going to be confronted with something we don't understand or have the way we look at life challenged. A real disciple keeps asking questions and is open to being changed by the answers that Our Lord offers.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott

## **"Journey of Faith" Starting This Fall**

If you or someone you know would like to learn more about the Catholic faith, we have just the thing for you. Journey of Faith is a class that meets from September to May at St. Brigid Church Hall on Monday nights at 7 p.m. Curious about Catholicism? Do you have loved ones who are Catholic and want to understand where they are coming from? Are you Catholic and want to know your faith better? Thinking about becoming Catholic? Journey of Faith is for you. This class is the place for you to bring your questions about the teachings, practices, and history of the Catholic church. Interested? Call St. Brigid Church office at 217-645-3444 or email Fr. Scott at [pastor@stsbej.org](mailto:pastor@stsbej.org)