

Homily for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Tim

Picture John, standing waist-deep in the Jordan,
preaching and baptizing,
and suddenly he spots another preacher, on the shore,
and recognizing Jesus he tells the crowd,
*Look! There he is! There is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world!*

I suppose that when I'm asked, "What does a priest do?"
I might well answer,
"I do what John the Baptist did.
I spend my life telling people where Jesus is."

Where Jesus is...

Well, of course, Jesus is everywhere - in the power of his Spirit.

Jesus is within me, beside me,
behind me, before me, above and below me
and yet -
it's often easy to miss him, or ignore him, or lose track of him,
or fail to find him
- even though he's everywhere.

So much of what I do is meant to help people see where Jesus is,
especially when it might seem that he has forgotten us,
or is too busy for us -- or that he's disappeared...

In a real sense, I spend my life as a priest helping others see
someone who's everywhere,
someone who's within them and all around them -- all the time.

And it's in that very work, my ministry,
that all of you, over and over again, help me find Jesus:

when I, like you, lose sight of him or drift from his side,
I see him in you...

when I, like you, fail to pray and seek him out,
you call me to lead you in prayer and I find him with you...

when I, like you, get lost and don't know where to turn,
your day-to-day fidelity helps me find the way...

when I, like you, sin,
and forget that Jesus is the Lamb of God

who takes away the sin of the world,
your open honesty humbles me and reminds me
of my need for God's mercy...

When you come to me with your grief,
you bring me to the Lord who heals my grieving...

When you come to me in your joy,
your joy in God becomes my own...

When you come looking for advice,
you remind me that the greatest counsel of all comes from the Lord.

When you expect me to preach,
you bring me back to the scriptures and prayer
and call me to my own need for God's Word in my life.

When you ask for the sacraments,
you call me to do what the Lord has asked of my life.

When you ask me to show you where Jesus is
you invite me to search with you and find him again
-- not just in your heart but in mine, too.

When my work, my ministry calls me to tell you,
Look! There is the Lamb of God!
my own attention as well as yours is drawn to Christ.

My calling is to show you where the Lord is
and in answering that call, I find him, too, again and again.

I'm especially mindful of this because next weekend
we'll have an introduction to a program called [Catholics Come Home](#).
Statistics tell us that in the Archdiocese of Boston
only 17% of Catholics come to Sunday Mass regularly
which means that 83% are regularly absent from our prayer.

That makes of you and me a very select group of Catholic Christians
and we have some work to do.

We need to find ways to help others see where Jesus is
and invite them home to the Lord's table
and our prayer and life together.

You won't be asked to take turns
standing on the green in Monument Square, shouting,
Look! There is the Lamb of God!
But all of us will be asked to look at our own faith
and to see in what simple, quiet ways we might share it with others

in the hope that they'll come home to be with us.

As you encourage me in my faith
when you share with me your struggles and joys,
so might we encourage those who have drifted away to come home
in sharing the stories of our own faith journeys.

Here is the altar, the table, we Catholics home
and the Supper we share here is food for those
who seek to know where Jesus is -- and to follow him.

What is it we say every week, just before Communion?
*This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world:
happy are those who are called to his Supper...*

May the Eucharist we celebrate every Sunday
nourish us for the work of inviting home those whose presence
will increase our joy and help us see, together,
where Jesus is among us.

- *Rev. Austin H. Fleming*