

Homily – St. Anthony Student Center UTSA

August 26, 2018

Does this shock you? “Does this shock you?” Jesus asked his disciples. He had said that he is the Bread of Life and that those who eat his flesh and drank his blood will live forever. This seems to have been a turning point. As we heard, “many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.”

“Does this shock you?” Does it shake your faith? When are the times when you are tempted to break away? Often the unexpected shocks of life shake our faith. A parent dies without warning. A youngster contracts a painful disease. A terrible crime intrudes on an innocent, peaceful life. It shakes our faith. Recent reports of sexual abuse by priests and an archbishop, as well as the failure of some bishops to handle these matters appropriately, shock us. They shake our faith. We feel anger, shame, confusion, disgust. These crimes and serious sins wound all of us. We are the Body of Christ. Pope Francis reminded us this week that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Cor 12:26). But now Jesus asks us a second question: “Do you also want to leave?” Is Peter’s response our own: “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

Peter adds: “We have come to believe... that you are the Holy One of God.” Faith is not often arrived at in an instant. It is more gradual than that, like a seed growing in the earth. Ironically, perhaps, faith often grows stronger in times of darkness and trial, when we might be tempted to believe that our faith is failing us.

It is not our faith that fails us. We belong to the People of God – the sinful People of God, in constant need of conversion, reform, renewal. That includes each of us and all of us. When Pope Francis was asked by a journalist who he really is, the Pope answered simply “I am a sinner.” We are all in this together. If we are to reform and renew the Church – to get rid of the poison and evil that we sometimes find in our midst – we will have to work together, all of us. It can no longer be seen as simply the responsibility of the bishop or the priests. Because of our baptism we all share responsibility for the Church’s mission and ministry. As missionary disciples of the risen Lord, we are to proclaim the gospel of love, especially through our daily actions. We are to bring healing to those who suffer.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us always. She will see us through these trying times. Dear Lady, embrace us with your love!