

September 19, 2021

Faith Crisis

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Recently, someone stopped by the office and asked directions on how to get into the church. I always try to take a moment and give a little guided tour of how people can access the sanctuary if they are new to our community, so I walked with our guest to guide her. As I walked into the sanctuary with this person, they took in a huge breath of air and proclaimed how good it smelled in the church and then proceeded to share that it had been such a long while since she had been inside a church. I carefully asked if she cared to share what had been keeping her away and without hesitation she shared a heart-wrenching story of personal tragedy and loss and then sadly, how the humanness of our Catholic church had not supported her during that loss, but rather, from her perspective, had added to the hurt.

How often have you heard a story like this? Sometimes it is the way the funeral of a loved one was handled, or a wedding, or maybe something that was experienced during the sacrament of reconciliation. Or maybe it is something that was said in a homily or taken out of context from the pulpit or in a personal conversation with a spiritual leader. Or it might be as simple as someone has just gotten out of the habit of going to Mass. All these examples are what I call *faith crises*. Maybe you have even experienced your own faith crisis at some point in your life, and honestly, if you have, you are so far from alone. Faith is hard work! By definition, it is complete trust or confidence in God, or the doctrines of religion based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. Our human minds just naturally struggle with belief without proof, right? We do not need to look any further than Thomas to know this is true. If one of the Twelve could have a *faith crisis* certainly we can too!

In today's Gospel we hear how Jesus traveled from one village to another teaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. Just imagine how life transforming this must have been for people to hear this news from Jesus! How blessed we are to have our faith to lean on when life is challenging, and how difficult it must be for people who have had a faith crisis to no longer feel the comforting arms of Christ when life is difficult. Even though we don't always understand Christ's ways, we always trust them because we have faith!

As we are in a month where we are focusing on **Back to School–Back to Mass** perhaps consider how you might also proclaim the good news and invite someone who has had a faith crisis to join us for Sunday Mass and encounter the healing of Jesus in

their lives. Maybe they just need to know we care. I think I speak for the entire staff when I say that if someone has encountered difficulty with a sacramental issue of any type, we will do everything we can to help them through resolving that struggle.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel” Maya Angelou

This week, I am going to try to make someone having a faith crisis ‘feel good’ by letting them know I care. Maybe you can do the same?

Peace+