

## **The Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

The preaching of Jesus attracted all sorts of people who lived at the fringes of, or were oppressed by, Palestinian society. Jesus' message was especially attractive to them. Tensions among the huge variety of Jesus' disciples, between the rich and the poor, men and women, the Jews and Gentiles, the socially respectable and those with outrageous backgrounds continued after his death throughout the next decades, during which the Gospels were written.

It's hard for us to imagine what a diverse and scandalous group in many respects, the first fathers and mothers of our faith were seen to be. Imagine, if you will, the fuss that would still be created if the local bishop was seen constantly dining with women in prostitution, drug dealers or known terrorists. People would be outraged, but the bishop would be doing nothing short of following Jesus' example. This situation gives us a little insight into how affronted the Chief Priests and Pharisees were by Jesus and, in turn, by his disciples' behavior.

For Jesus there was never a lost case, or a person beyond help. He didn't just spend time with the poor and broken of his society, but offered them a new way of life, an opportunity to start again and redemption from their destructive behavior. He went to where they were, as they were. And we do the same because this is precisely what God has done for us. God didn't wait for us to "talk the talk" before we could "walk his walk." Jesus came to us when we were religiously dumb and immobile and showed us how to speak, what to say and where to walk.

The Christian walk and talk is meant to have a profound impact on our daily lives, our concerns, our priorities and compassion. So much so that if, over a period of time, what we celebrate here each Sunday makes no inroads into our family life and workplace, our professional life, our business practices and our relationships, then we should ask ourselves what we are doing here.

And, what's worse, we could even miss the ongoing revelation of Christ's presence in the poor, weak, and vulnerable of our own society. We constantly look for Christ in the spectacular and the wonderful and he comes to us in the least of our brother and sisters.

May this Eucharist give us the strength to not only "look good," but to "be good," to start over if we need to, and do our best to live out the faith we profess. May it strengthen us to find the Lord where he is, and not keep looking in the places where we would prefer him to be.

Fr. Eric T. Carpine, ofm