

A man appeared before St. Peter at the pearly gates. "Have you ever done anything of particular merit?" St. Peter asked.

"Well," the man said, "once I came upon a gang of bikers who were threatening a young woman. I approached the largest and most heavily tattooed biker and smacked him on the head, kicked over his bike, ripped out his nose ring, and threw it on the ground. 'Now leave her alone!' I yelled." St. Peter was impressed: "When did this happen?". "Just a couple of minutes ago."

Dear Friends,

As human beings we can know God, but can never understand God. We learn about God. We hear about God. We should experience and encounter God in our life. And so we must be humble, both in our theology and in our ecclesiology.

Today's readings explain the wisdom of God in Jesus. All the first readings in Lent so far treat us with covenantal relationship God made with different people. On the first Sunday of Lent, we reflected on the Covenant that God made with the world through Noah. Last Sunday our meditation was on the Covenant Promises God made to Abraham and his descendants. On this third Sunday of Lent, we consider the third Covenant God made with His chosen people through Moses at Mount Sinai.

In that Covenant, God, who had liberated His people from slavery in Egypt, promised to make the Jews His own people, to lead them to the Promised Land, and to protect them from their enemies. The people in return, agreed to obey the Ten Commandments and other laws given by Yahweh through Moses. The Ten Commandments form a list of directives or instructions for living out our Covenant relationship.

In the second reading, St. Paul requests us to look at the wisdom of the cross. Paul is presenting an idea that would have been startling to some people: Faith in Christ and His death on the cross for human sin cannot be arrived at by human intellect, human wisdom, or human logic. It must be believed by simple faith in the foolish-sounding revelation of God's Word.

Paul now points to the characteristics of the two primary cultures of his day that make this simple faith so difficult. He writes that the Jews demand signs. By this, Paul says that the Jewish people of his era wanted to be convinced by miracles and not by faith. While the Jews demand signs, the Greeks seek wisdom. The Greeks placed enormous value both on human wisdom and a life dedicated to looking for it. It seemed opposed to human wisdom that God should die. It is total contrary to them that Christ dies on the cross. Basically both didn't have faith in crucified Christ. The foolishness of God resides in giving

oneself totally for the life of others. In a world in which we are taught the skills of self-preservation over and against the needs of others, the truth of the cross remains a message of folly and weakness.

Paul believes in the suffering Messiah who gave his life for others, who cares and loves others. That is the real relationship.

Jesus in the Gospel, talks his suffering and death.

Let us reflect about what is my relation to the cross? How do I look at the cross? What kind of relationship do I develop?

"Look at the cross and you will know what one soul means to Jesus" - Mother Theresa