

## Fr. Martin's Reflection – June 25, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Most of us want to fit in; be a part of the team, may that be sporting or social. We don't want to stand out or be different. For most of us that is easy; we like the sports we play and our teammates, we like our social club and its members. We like our friends. The problem arises when members of our team begin to cheat, and we only find out about it when we are nearing the end of the season and our team is on top. The club is passing rules that offend me, but none of my fellow members seem to mind or say it doesn't affect them. My friends are taking advantage of someone that is different. Moral dilemmas – what should we do?

Moral dilemmas have been part of human society since time began. Adam and Eve—should Adam eat the apple? Should he take responsibility for his own actions, or should he blame Eve? The sinfulness of Adam and Eve is a sinfulness that dwells within all of us. Adam and Eve knew what they could and could not do, God told them. Adam and Eve listened to another voice, a voice that caused them to defy God. God challenged Adam and Eve on what it was they did and outlined to them the consequences of their actions (even though in Genesis it states God punished them, I feel God has a difficulty punishing us as God knows we do a pretty good job of that ourselves). God still loved them, disappointed, yes, but still loved them and allowed them to build a family that extends to this day.

We too, like Adam and Eve, have been made aware of what is right and what is wrong—from the prophets to Jesus Christ. Like Adam and Eve, we are inclined to listen to other voices, either because they seem to make a good argument or because we simply don't want to be different, we want to be liked even though we know it's wrong. Whenever we do wrong, or go along with wrong or witness wrong that has been done, does God speak directly to us as God did to Adam and Eve? Yes!

In our first reading from Jeremiah, we see Jeremiah challenged from all sides because of the truth he speaks, but in his loneliness he is aware of one constant, God. **“But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph. In their failure they will be put to utter shame, to lasting, unforgettable confusion.”**

In our gospel, Jesus encourages the twelve: **“Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”**

None of us sets out to be a voice for God, we just want to believe and worship quietly. But sometimes, like Jeremiah, a reluctant prophet, we are asked by God to be his witness. Not someone who shouts and condemns but someone who speaks with love and compassion. All Jesus asked from his disciples was to take the message and share it with others and if they won't listen, then shake the dust from your feet and tell them the Kingdom God is among them. In the words of St Francis de Sales: “A spoonful of honey attracts more flies than a barrelful of vinegar.” Let us always be Ambassadors for Christ, never afraid to live His word or to share it with all whom we meet.

May God bless you and guide you throughout this coming week and always.

*Fr. Martin*