

Fr. O'Connor's Homily – July 8, 2018

Who do you think you are?

Has anybody ever asked you this question? Probably. Almost all of us have.

There's a saying that comes to mind frequently i.e. "We don't see things as they are but as we are." Most of us have heavy agendas going on in our minds. There are joyful thoughts-happiness. But there are doses of fear and worry as well – even unforgiveness. Many of us struggle with being judgmental. There's lots going on inside us, so it's hard, nearly impossible to see things as they really are.

Many years ago I traveled to the Holy Land. One of my most vivid memories is of the Hill of Rejection. In St. Luke's Gospel, we read that Jesus' neighbors led him to a high cliff where they planned to throw him off. But he walked straight through the crowd. Why were Jesus' neighbor's so blind? Well, they thought they knew. Isn't this the carpenter's son?

O.K. Have you ever met someone or even heard of someone who seems to see things as they are? I'm thinking of Mother Teresa and my friend, Cardinal Peter Turkson from Ghana and the monk, Thomas Merton.

For years I read his books again and again. Here is a sample from one of his books describing an experience he had.

"It was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin, nor desire, nor self-knowledge can reach the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they all could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed."

So how do we get to see things as they really are? How could Jesus' neighbors get to see Jesus as he really is? I believe the short answer is prayer- union with Jesus Christ, the Holy Mass/ Eucharist.

Contemplative prayer, silent prayer, Centering Prayer. Many people stay away from quiet prayer because they are afraid they will lose their minds. But that's the whole point- we have to lose our minds (our monkey minds) in order to see things as they are.

There are other ways to clear a mind. There is the rosary, forgiving and being forgiven which lead to a clear mind. Standing in solidarity with the poor, the alien and the outcast are sure roots to seeing things as they are.

The call of the Gospel is to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who fills all of creation and our lives. May we see things as they are.