

# THE PASTOR'S POST

## SETTLING

Dear Parish Family:

I have a person in my life who is very frustrated with the things of the world these days. Maybe you know someone like this too? Needless to say, she is frustrated with the government - on all levels, and the many despairing situations we are facing in the world. She is profoundly disappointed in the Church, particularly in these days.

As the priest :)! , as you can imagine, I hear quite regularly about her frustrations, particularly with the Church. "Where are they, John?" "Nice statement, no action." "Good video about migrants, so what are you doing about it?" "Racist video from political leaders, where's the Church, John? Where are the prophets?"

I hear her voice and I agree with her to some extent on some of her concerns. Yet, I am uncertain what to do. Write another letter? Send another email? I don't give up. But I'm not sure what to do. So I tend to put my head down and focus on what is before me. I hope that is enough.

I settled.

"What can you do?", I say to myself. I can't fix all of those issues. I will work my best in the part of the world I am sent to. That's enough. Or is it?

As I have been praying with this Sunday's Gospel, I feel called out. Jesus, in referring to the Law, is arguing against settling, right? The Jewish leaders know the written laws. Jesus knows they know. He says during many parts of the reading, "You have heard it was said..." and calls them to go to a deeper place. They spend the rest of the Gospel avoiding that call.

They have settled. We are following the Law. We know it. We hear the Commandments. We follow them.

What is Jesus saying to them? It's not enough.

We may have settled. We say, "Look, I'm

following the law." I know what is allowed and not allowed.

What is Jesus saying to you and to me? It's not enough.

So, this week, as we get ready for Lent, can we look within and admit there are places we have settled. Do we follow the "letter of the law", i.e. "no adultery here", but miss the spirit, i.e. "so I visit a few websites every now and then." Or "I would never hurt another person or take their life", but "I have heard about him or her, I would not want that person in my life." Maybe instead of just looking at the places we sin - a good thing to do regularly - can we look where we have settled. Instead of moving deeper, examine the places we have stayed on the surface.

This, of course, extends beyond our own interior conversion. Have we settled when it comes to "loving our neighbor"? Have I settled for injustice and not done everything I can to bring about change? Maybe I don't speak poorly of those afflicted but do I speak up and act out when I see human beings - from womb to tomb - being disrespected and destroyed? Perhaps, I need to take a more forceful stand when I see evil taken up against others because of their skin color or accent or paper status? Maybe instead of rolling my eyes and saying "what are you going to do" I can in words and actions say, "No. This is wrong."

This sounds good. It's not easy. It wasn't for Jesus or for his disciples. Honestly, sometimes, I don't know where to start. So it's easier to put my head down and get to work. I pray the Lenten journey will help me to keep my head up, following the lead of the Spirit who scrutinizes everything, especially the settled places of my heart (1 Corinthians 2:10). Maybe the same for you too?

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

*Featherman*