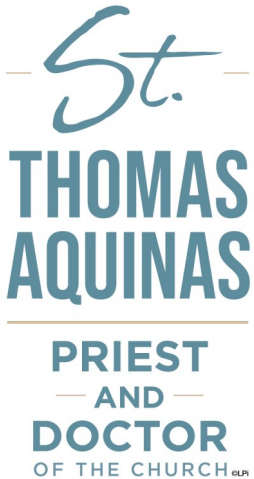


FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, is called ‘The Sunday of the Word of God.’ It is devoted to the celebration, study, and dissemination of the Word of God, and was instituted by Pope Francis in 2019. St. Jerome devoted his entire life to study the Scriptures. He even learned the language the Scriptures were originally written in, Hebrew. He translated most of the Bible into Latin, coming from a strong belief that: “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” This Sunday reminds us of the hidden treasure contained in Sacred Scripture. As somebody once said, “We don’t change the message, the message changes us.” May this powerful story that follows inspire us all:

“The story is told of an actor who was known for his readings and recitations from the Classics. He always ended his performance with a dramatic recital of Psalm 23. Each night, without exception, as the actor began his recitation - “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” - the crowd would listen attentively and then rise with thunderous applause, in appreciation of the actor’s ability to bring the psalm to life.

One night, just before the actor was to offer his customary recital of Psalm 23, a young man from the audience spoke up. “Sir, would you mind, if tonight, I recite Psalm 23?” The actor was surprised by this unusual request. However, he invited the young man to come onto the stage to recite the psalm, curious to see how the ability of this youth weighed against his own talent.

Softly the young man began to recite the words of the psalm. When he was finished, there was no applause. There was no standing ovation as on other nights. All that could be heard was the sound of weeping. The audience had been so moved by the youth’s recitation that every eye was tearful.

Amazed by what he had experienced, the actor queried, “I don’t understand. I have been performing Psalm 23 for years. I have a lifetime of experience and training - but I have never been able to move an audience as you have tonight. Tell me, what is your secret?”

The young man humbly replied, “Well sir, you know the psalm...but I know the Shepherd.””

On Tuesday, January 28th, we will celebrate the Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas. The following excerpt from ‘A conference by Saint Thomas Aquinas, priest,’ about how the Cross exemplifies every virtue, is from the Second Reading from the Office of Readings for his Memorial. May it help us to know the Shepherd.

“Why did the Son of God have to suffer for us? There was a great need, and it can be considered in a twofold way: in the first place, as a remedy for sin, and secondly, as an example of how to act.

It is a remedy, for, in the face of all the evils which we incur on account of our sins, we have found relief through the passion of Christ. Yet, it is no less an example, for the passion of Christ completely suffices to fashion our lives. Whoever wishes to live perfectly should do nothing but disdain what Christ disdained on the cross and desire what he desired, for the cross exemplifies every virtue.

If you seek the example of love: *Greater love than this no man has, than to lay down his life for his friends.* Such a man was Christ on the cross. And if he gave his life for us, then it should not be difficult to bear whatever hardships arise for his sake.”

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Fr. Jason'.