

HOMILY 21ST SUN OT YRB 2018

I have a friend who has a son named Billy. When Billy was 5 or 6 years old, his favorite toy was a remote control car. He played with it a lot and when the batteries went dead, he took it to his father and he changed the batteries right away. One day, Billy decided to see what would happen if he drove the car off the deck. Well, it sailed off the deck and crashed and broke. He took it to his father to fix and he father told him that it would take some time and he could not do it right away, but he would do it later. Billy wanted the car back, so his father gave it to him. Billy decided he was going to fix it himself. He found a hammer and wacked it a few times. He found a screw driver and poked at it a while, but it still would not work, so he took it back to his father. Well, Billy had made it worse and his father told him he would have to go to the store the next day to buy some parts to fix it. Billy wanted the car back, and his father gave it to him. Billy decided he was going to fix the car himself, so he wacked it with the hammer and poked at it with a screw driver again, which only made things worse. You get the picture.

We sometimes do this with God. We stick with him when things are going well. We stick with him when we have difficulties and he seems to straighten things out the way we want them to work out. But when that does not happen right away, we abandon God and take things into our own hands, and that usually does not go very well. We sometimes abandon God when we need him the most.

I think that is what was happening in the Gospel reading today. The Jewish people had been looking for the Messiah all of their lives. They heard about Jesus, how he changed water into wine, how he drove out demons and cured the sick. They listened to his teachings and he fed them by multiplying the loaves and fishes, and they decided to follow him. Then when Jesus told them: "I am the Bread of Life. If you eat my Body and drink my Blood you will have eternal life." They did not understand this. They said: "This is hard." This is not what we are looking for in a Messiah. We just want you to take care of us right now. And most of them left him and went back to their former way of life. They left Jesus when he was exactly the one that they needed. The apostles saw the signs that

Jesus had performed and trusted that Jesus, who performed these miracles, could help them. They trusted and stuck with him.

We have had our ups and downs over the years at St. Edith. People left the Church because of something the priest had done, something a staff member had done, something a member of our parish family had done. But many of you stayed. You did not give up on God and the Church because of something an individual had done. You know why you are here. You are here for the Eucharist, the Sacraments, and a faith community that is loving and supportive. You did not let something that an individual did to hurt you take God and the Church from you.

I was devastated by what was reported recently in Pennsylvania with the clergy abuse and the cover up. I am so afraid that people will abandon the Church because of thing that priests and bishops did in the past. There is absolutely no excuse for the things that they did in the past. I apologize to anyone who was hurt by their actions and they need to be held accountable. I remember when the clergy abuse first came to light in the Archdiocese of Detroit almost 20 years ago. I was in seminary on my ministerial year. It happened during Holy Week. I went and sat with the staff and parishioners where a priest was removed and heard how hurt they were by what their pastor had done. At the end of the day I thought: “Do I want to be part of a priesthood that could do something like this? Do I want to be ordained I took it to prayer and God my answer by Easter Sunday. God told me: “You do not want to be part of that priesthood. You will not be part of that. This is why you have to become a priest.” I decided I was not going to give up on God and the Church because of the unspeakable things that a few priests and Bishops had done. I knew that I would never be part of the problem, but I could be part of the solution. My plea to all of you today is that you remember why you are here. Please do not abandon God and the Church when you need them the most. All of you can be part of the solution.