

FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM: Last week I had the opportunity to go on retreat with all the clergy from our eparchy. This was an opportunity to focus and to “recharge” my spiritual batteries. Sometimes life gets busy and we forget to step back and look at the whole picture. We forget that in the midst of our chaos there is a rock that helps to keep us grounded; Paul reminds us that “Christ is our peace, he who made both one and broke down



the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, the he might create in himself one new person in the place of two, thus establishing peace...” (Letter to the Ephesians 2: 14...). Sometimes we live double lives – we portray peace and contentment to those around us, yet inside we struggle with turmoil’s that cry to be released. We claim to have faith, but we are full of doubts. We claim that we are happy, but we are miserable. We come to understand the message of Christ who proclaimed: “I came that you may have life...” only

when we are able to embrace our lives in the “now”, not looking back, nor looking forward, but now...this is where we are, this is what we are living. Dealing with the present helps us to keep our past in perspective and to release all the negative energy we give it. Dealing with the present also allows us to hope for the future while helping us to face the reality we are in, and to ask us where we would like to be in 1 month, 2 months, 1 year or more down the road. Facing what is before us, helps to focus and get a healthy perspective on our lives. Paul again gives affirms this if we listen to his words and take them to heart: “So then, you are longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the family of God... Through him we are held together and will grow into a temple sacred to the Lord, in him you are also being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” As much as we are afraid to face our challenges and our fears, Jesus reminds us in today’s Gospel “Do not be afraid.” The woman healed of hemorrhaging was afraid when she realized she would be found out for having reached out to Jesus, probably because most people would have turned her away. Jesus on the other hand actually “felt” her faith, and told her to go in peace. This simple

act of faith transformed her life, because she trusted in a power greater than herself when there was nowhere else to turn. She drew power from Christ's divinity, yet she was comforted by his humanity.

This is how it works. God works in our lives daily, yet we still fail to see him. We are still looking for this God high above the sky, whom we cannot see nor touch, yet if we look to each other we can see him as he is: Living and working in each one of us – touching our lives, giving us joy, holding our hand through trials and comforting us in our sorrow. Each human heart that touches another is a spark of the divine – made in his image and likeness we do not live in fear, but in faith, not in despair but in hope, and we can experience joy and laughter even in the midst of our sorrow.

LET US PRAY:

Loving God, you sent Jesus into the world that through him we could know you more intimately, and that fear may dissipate so that only love is left. Help me to look at my life now – not the past, not the future- but NOW. May I see myself as I truly am, weak in my humanity, but strong in your love. I need to recognize you in the crowd, especially those who have, and will cross my path to bring comfort, strength and joy – for it is you living in them that allows me to see and experience your love daily. Thank you for this gift. Amen.