

“We would like to see Jesus.”

This week's gospel starts with a report that some foreigners from Greece had come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, and they told Philip that they would like to see Jesus. Clearly Jesus had developed quite following and was being talked about throughout the region.

Recently, I was talking to an army officer in my unit and I asked him whether he had ever had any involvement with a church. He told me that his parents had never gone to church, and apart from memorial services, funerals and weddings neither had he. But he then said to my surprise: “But I do believe in Jesus! He had a lot of good things to say, and I want to try to live my life like he did.”

I got quite a surprise that the person - Jesus of Nazareth- had somehow made an impact in this man's life. It occurred to me that this was a significant issue for us in our work as a church in the area of evangelization.

I'm sure there are many people in the world that do not fully understand what we as Catholics are on about. Recently I attended a fundraising breakfast in the city hosted by the Knights of Malta, in support of the homeless. Cardinal George Pell came up from Sydney as the guest speaker. He spoke about the state of the church today, reflecting on the many good things and the many challenges we have.

One of the main challenges he spoke of was our need to educate people who were not church goers, about what we believe in. He pondered how many people viewed the church simply as a social welfare organization, or they saw us preoccupied with bells and smells, and rules and regulations.

He then reminded us that the central tenet of our identity as Catholics was the person of Jesus. Everything we say and do should lead us and others to Him. We all need to remind of that. We need to see Jesus in all that we do. We need to imagine him afresh in this time of Lent, and we need to renew our commitment to him at Easter.

We know that , but yes we can take our eyes off him , and lose sight of what we are on about at times.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of our life and identity as Catholics. May we see him more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly, day by day!

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a Disciple of Jesus