

Homily We would like to see Jesus: John 12:20

Anyone who has read the front page of today's Parish bulletin will see that my attention was captured by this first statement in today's gospel . *We would like to see Jesus*. It was central to a talk that Cardinal Pell gave recently. He reminded a group of us that the person of Jesus is at the centre of Catholicism, and that we needed to be promoting Jesus more than any other dimension of our church.

2000 years ago, some Greeks had come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival and they told Philip that "We would like to see Jesus".

Phillip went to tell Andrew about this , and Andrew and Philip both went and told Jesus. But it doesn't seem from the scriptural account that they got to see Jesus at all.

I tried to imagine what this might have been like for them so let me play that out for you as if I was one of those Greeks , as it has implications for us today .

We came to see Jesus today . There been lots of stories going round about him. We wanted to see Jesus because he seemed to be the sort of person that we could identify with . We'd heard that he came into the temple recently and cleaned it up, upsetting the temple police . Good on him I say . The way people act in the temple has long been a problem for me - the way people keep us segregated outside its series of walls. We've heard too that he has a gift of healing. There is lots of healing needed in our lives. We are not locals you see. We feel on the outer. We want to believe in God. We want to belong to a community. Some people are saying that Jesus is the Messiah, and that he wants a church that is reformed by love. Wouldn't that be good. We haven't found that yet. We would like to be followers of Jesus. We just don't know how to do that.

We came, but couldn't get to see him. There were many people around him for sure . But his inner circle didn't seem interested in connecting us with him. They seemed pre-occupied with themselves and improving their lot . Sure they were pious and prayerful , but they were so focused on other things , that they forgot about us out here. We could make a contribution to this community, but at the moment we seem to be excluded.

I still want to see Jesus. Philip and Andrew were no help to us , but would you help us see Jesus. Would you help us see Jesus?

Im conscious that in two weeks time we are going to be having a festival here. There's going to be lots of people coming, that we don't normally see. There's going to be some real foreigners amongst the crowd. Some will come out of guilt , some will come out of wonder, some will come looking to see what he can find . What will they find in us . What will they see?

What they need to see – is Jesus. He is the very centre of our faith . He is the Alpha and the Omega. Everything we say or do as Catholics has its foundation in the person of Jesus.

He is our hope and inspiration. His teachings and his way of life are the basis of Catholicism. But in the first instance people are going to see us. And we will have an opportunity to help them see Jesus.

We know Jesus, his spirit lives in us – how good is that ! If we don't know him fully enough we know we can learn more about him through the scriptures and through courses and through meeting up with people who do know him.

But there are a growing number of people in our neighbourhood who don't know Jesus. There are heaps of people who have been baptized as Catholics but have never embraced a relationship with Jesus. Some of them will join us at Easter. There are even more who have never been baptized or had any involvement with church. Some of them will come at Easter out of curiosity. There are others that have been solid members of our community in the past but have drifted away , or left because of some misunderstanding or hurt . Some of them will come because deep down they know this is home. They will be wondering if any of us will notice them and make them feel welcome.

Easter is prime time for us to be fulfilling Pope Benedicts call for a new evangelization. Why should we get involved – because every human being needs Jesus. Everyone needs to receive His grace and love and joy and peace. And the way God normally passes this on is through one-on-one human interaction. Lets greet people with a smile . Lets sing joyfully and participate attentively . Lets notice who we are worshipping with . Lets go out of our way to introduce ourselves to anyone we don't know. Lets ensure any visitors here know that Jesus is here among us.

May we be proud that we are disciples of Jesus. For the last few weeks people have been all around the suburbs wearing T shirts with Keep Kate or Can Do on them . I'm grateful for all our electoral candidates for what they've done in our community , but for the next two weeks Im going to be wearing this shirt – I love Jesus, and Jesus loves you. I think that's the best policy I can promote, and it's not just good news, its the best news that I or we could share with anyone . Jesus is the reason for the season

Over the next few weeks may we celebrate Jesus, in the words of that famous lyric from the musical Jesus Christ superstar - may we see him more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly – day by day. *See him more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly – day by day.*