

## FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Regrettably, I have not been able to watch the American news outlet since arriving in Africa, nor have I had an easy access to internet. I do understand that Bishop Stika has responded to the Pennsylvania attorney general's grand jury report concerning the homosexual subculture within the hierarchy who have committed heinous crimes amongst many innocent young people over the decades. It seems crucial that the perpetrators of these sinful acts be held accountable. Our heartfelt responses are prayerfully extended to those many victims who have had to endure tremendous interior suffering, some of whom have passed from this world.



Today we come to the end of the protracted Bread of Life Discourse as seen through the eyes of Saint John. We observe that many of Jesus' disciples still could not understand his teaching and asked "... who can accept this?" At the end of the teaching, John concludes by saying that "many of the disciples returned to their former ways of life." Our Christian life is a series of daily choices for or against God, to live out or reject the truths of the Gospel.

In our First Reading, Joshua challenges the Israelites to decide who *they* will serve, the gods of the Amorites or the God of the Israelites, He who delivered them out of slavery. The Second Reading is one of the favorite passages for many men: "... wives be subordinate to your husband as to the Lord." Husbands! Take a breath! Paul simply wants to encourage the Ephesian Christians to make the right choice in life and build Christian marriages on mutual love and respect, accepting each spouse's rights and dignity. He uses Christ and the Church as an example to emulate.

In today's Gospel, John conveys that many of our Lord's followers returned to their former way of life. Jesus gives his twelve apostles the option of leaving or remaining with Him. Like some of the 'fallen away' disciples, certain teachings of Jesus may appear challenging for us to follow. For example... *love your enemies and pray for them..... if someone asks for a tunic, give him two.... if you have one hundred sheep and one goes astray, leave the ninety-nine and go in search of the lost one.* These are hard, but at the same time important, because instead of devaluing a person, these express God's merciful love even for sinners and appreciation of his creatures. The twelve apostles exercise their freedom of choice by their desire to stay with Jesus.

In this Eucharistic celebration, we too are called each time to make a decision, profess our faith in God's Son, and renew the covenant ratified in his life, death, and resurrection. Your participation in our Eucharistic celebration is such a wonderful testament to Jesus' Real Presence.

We Christians have accepted the gift to follow the way of Christ, lovingly making choices for Christ, fortified by his Body and Blood, relying on the power of his Holy Spirit. Family, let us never abandon our faith in Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is not going to occur without our prayers and fasting, even despite outside ridicule, criticisms, perhaps social isolation for our adherence to sound Christian principles in our lives. But like St. Peter speaking for the Apostolic College, we must all stand by the truth and acclaim: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

— Blessed Sunday!