

HOMILY FOR 14th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME -- C

Alzheimer's is a terrible disease. Alzheimer's and its stepchild, dementia, are frightening not so much that it makes people forget....after all, we all forget. What makes it frightening is that people with Alzheimer's forget relationships. People with Alzheimer's slowly but steadily forget the relationships that are the most treasured part of their life, their existence. They forget their friends. They forget their children. And ultimately they forget their spouses.

We can suffer from a form of Alzheimer's that is subtle and terrifying. The Alzheimer's of which I speak is an Alzheimer's of the spirit, of the soul. And like the Alzheimer's that afflicts so many people whom we hold dear to our hearts, this Alzheimer's of the spirit also makes us forget relationships. Only the relationship we forget is not with spouses or children or friends. The relationship we forget is our relationship to Jesus Christ.

The gospel in these early weeks of the summer center on the theme of discipleship. And what is central to this theme of discipleship is that a true disciple is one who is in relationship to Jesus Christ. For it is Christ who tenderly instructs the disciples. It is Christ from whom the

disciples go forth. It is in the name of Christ that the disciples act. And it is to Christ to whom the disciples return.

We live in a world where everyone tells us that the most important thing is “me”what “I” want, how “I” feel, where “I” am going. We buy into that. We think that we are the center of the universe. We even can foolishly believe that God is at our service – not we at His.

These summer gospels about discipleship are meant to remind us of who and what we truly are. They are intended to cure us of our Alzheimer’s of the soul. They are given to us to remind us once again that it is Jesus Christ who is the center not only of our lives but of all life. And it is our relationship to Christ that teaches us how to live our own lives and bring to each other the gift of God’s peace. And do not our hearts sorely yearn for that gift of inner peace and hope?