

One of my best friends from college is one of the smartest people I know. He is an extraordinary musician even though he doesn't practice, he enjoys reading textbooks, and he can give a talk on a variety of subjects, from theology to pairing cheeses and wines.

He came to Michigan State on an academic scholarship. He then started working as an assistant in the Physics lab and was part of publishing an article in a well-known Physics journal. The sky was the limit. He had both brains and personality. Unfortunately, that time didn't last. He got caught up in the freedom of college. Video games until 4 a.m., alcohol, and drugs. Suddenly his opportunities went down the drain after numerous warnings from the Academic office, and a plummeting GPA. He lost his scholarship. He got caught up in choosing the empty attractions that the world offered him.

So, whose are you? An odd question I want to pose. Not who are you? But whose are you? My friend belonged to video games, alcohol, and drugs. Who then do we belong too? Are we one who looks at Facebook for hours each day, a workaholic with a family, or a person who worries more about what others are doing?

In the first reading this weekend, Noah and God make a covenant. A covenant that God would be with him. A covenant like the one we established in our Baptism. The flood waters are our prefigured Baptism, and, like Noah, God is with us. St. Paul says we have put on Christ in our Baptism and the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Meaning, we have been given the graces from God in of our Baptism, but like the Israelites in the desert we often reject those graces. Very rarely do we tap into the covenantal graces we have been given, so we succumb to the temptations of the world. We watch football all day on Saturday and Sunday, or we sit around gossiping. Our lives are not about Christ in these situations. By the end of the week we end up only giving Jesus this hour on Sunday, or maybe we say prayers before bed. But how does maybe two hours a week of "Church stuff" compare to 3 hours a day on the computer, or 8 hours of football, or 5 hours of shopping? Whose have we become? Not Christ's, I can tell you, and I am speaking about myself too.

But the thing is, Christ wants us. He wants our "Whose are you" answers to be Him. He died on the cross for that answer to be Him. And He is here with us now, because we have been baptized into a life with him. Jesus will keep calling the sinner to repent because His ways are love and truth. But we must be open to receiving these messages of grace that come in the subtle moments of our daily lives. My friend who had let the world run his life eventually turned to Christ and listened. He got a job at Olive Garden to pay his way through college. He got a degree in advanced Mathematics and now runs the Young Adult Group at a local parish. He now lives from a place where he can answer the question whose am I? With Jesus. Because Jesus came to call sinners, which we all are, calling us to the Kingdom of God, which is at hand, a Kingdom that he is calling us to now, and to be in with him forever.

So, whose are you going to be this Lent?

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