

MESSAGE PRINTED IN WEEKLY BULLETIN (21 de octubre, 2018)

A Message from Father Chris....

Last week I wrote about having a relationship with Jesus Christ, and why many people believe incorrectly that this is not something taught by the Catholic Church. It has been said that all we need to have in our lives is a relationship with Jesus Christ. I say this is true. I know not everyone will agree with that, so I'd like to discuss exactly what that means. Am I saying that all I need in my life is Jesus and me? Am I saying that as long as I have that relationship, it doesn't matter whether or not I go to Mass, or whether I agree with any other teaching of the Church because I have a relationship with Jesus? No. To unpack what I am saying, we need to discuss what it truly means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

We are not called to simply have a relationship with Christ, we are called to have a good one. That means we need to love him. What does that mean? Well, that one is easy, because he told his disciples this in his farewell discourse found in John's Gospel. It's even carved in stone over the front entrance to our cathedral in Richmond. *If you love me, keep my commandments*. To which commandments is he referring? All of them or some of them? Well, as I've already said, that statement came from John's Gospel. If we read the rest of John's Gospel, we see that in the entire text, Jesus only ever gave his disciples one commandment. Just one. *My commandment is that you love one another as I have loved you*. If we want to embrace the relationship with Christ that he is inviting us to have, we must be able to love those around us in the same way. This also shows us the basis for the Church being the body of Christ. I can abandon the Church and still seek a relationship with Christ, but I cannot ever experience the fullness of that relationship without the Church.

When we act together as the body of Christ, we show the world how to experience that same relationship. Why is this so important? Look at Christ's life and ministry and how much of his life was dedicated to the service of others. If we want to know him and dedicate our lives to him, we have to seek to be like him. If I abandon the Church and its teaching and say all I need in my life is Christ, then I'm not serving him. I'm serving myself.