Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time C 2022

The word ‘Faith’ covers a broad spectrum. If we were to speak of our faith to someone we might describe what we do. We pray, we come regularly to mass. We are baptised, make our First Holy Communion, go to confession, are confirmed and so on. The Catholic Faith associates us with the Church around the world - with our pope, Francis; our Bishop Paul, the diocese, our local parish and community. These things describe how we organise our lives in response to our faith - but in fact our faith is something personal - even if it takes us a long time to realise this.

Our faith is personal - and it is in a person - Jesus. I think as Catholics we shy away from this - thinking it is for eccentric fundamentalists - and means we will have to go out and ask people if they have been saved yet, and those sort of embarrassing things. We find it easier to get on with the practices of our faith; the calming routines and rituals of our lives.

When St Paul and the other New Testament writers were alive there weren’t churches, the rituals and roles in the church that we now have were just slowly evolving. Their main focus was on Jesus - whose life they had shared, whose Resurrection they had witnessed. It was all about Him - as the meaning and hope of their lives. And so it is for us. Because it really only if our faith is in the person of Jesus that it will survive. For we all have shocks and difficulties in life. We have shocks and difficulties with the Church. It is what Jesus has said to us; what he has done for us; the love that he has for us that we must hold on to.

We can rejoice in the Church, frail though it can be. For it is the place where God’s Spirit moves; where we are able to live fruitful Christian lives. Where we can encounter, every day, the living Jesus. Who, one day, a day we do not expect, will invite us, as his followers, to join Him in the fullness of life and joy of Heaven.