

Homily  
Friday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent  
March 22, 2024

My newborn grandson is the center of his own universe. He can do nothing for himself. He relies on others to feed him, change him, hold him. My almost 4-year-old granddaughter is struggling to understand that she isn't the center of her own universe. She wants things her way, but is slowly realizing that she isn't the only one around. And she loves being a big sister, telling us what her little brother needs and how to take care of him.

I'm a husband, father and grandfather and I still struggle with recognizing that I'm not the center of my own universe. I often don't get my way, and it bothers me. I am slowly coming to realize that other people's needs frequently outweigh my own. My selfishness and my selflessness do battle daily.

How do we know when we need to look out for our own needs, wants and desires versus when we need to look out for others? It's not so much us versus them. Here's a better way to look at things: When do we see Christ in others and when do we see Christ in ourselves? In all things, we must see Christ first; we must keep our focus on Jesus.

The Jews believed that the Messiah was coming. Their entire faith relied on the prophets who foretold of the Son of God. And now they have Jesus, telling them that He is the Son of God, the I AM, the one Who knew Abraham, showing them signs and wonders. And their reaction? "Blasphemy!" "Let's stone Him!" Jesus came to fulfill the Old Covenant and establish the New Covenant. And they listened and they rejected Him and His message.

How are we doing? Sunday begins Holy Week, the final stretch of this Season of Lent. Are we following Christ's lead? Are we praying, repenting, giving alms? Or are we looking at ourselves as the center of our own universe? It's hard to let go of our own way of doing things. It's hard to look at others instead of ourselves, especially when we see so many others being selfish. But is that what Jesus is telling us to do? He is telling us to look at our own sinfulness and look at the needs of others, not the other way around. Before we cast the first stone, we must consider our own sinfulness. And we need to remember that Jesus is right there with us, helping us along the way, showing us how to pick up and carry our crosses. And if we are strong enough, faithful enough, carry them all the way to calvary and to the promise God has for each of us in His heavenly kingdom.