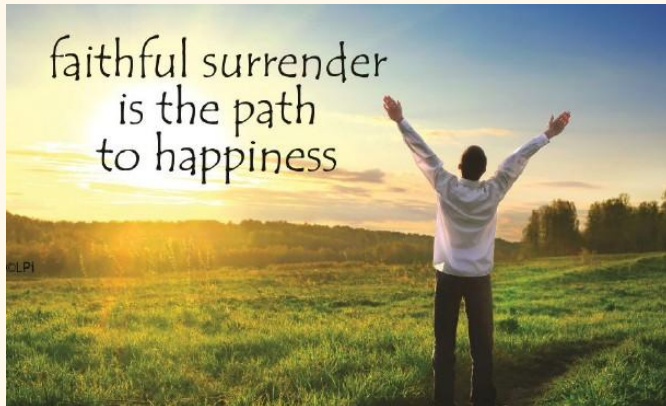




From the Desk of Father Peter

“The Law of the Garbage Truck”

Over the years, I have come to know that Christian spiritual tradition teaches that silence opens us to God’s Word and is necessary to a mature prayer life in Christ. To achieve greater intimacy with God—openness to listening to what God is saying—it



may not always be the way we want it, but we must move into a silent place where only God can reach us, use us, and mold us. Sometimes it comes in a fire, whisper, or wind.

The events of my life have taught me that as humans, we are constantly searching for a better life. For some it may be the better job or social status. During this constant search of what is presumed to be that better something, it is easy to miss the beauty in the story of our own lives. The ultimate happiness of what we may seek in other places may possibly be found right before our eyes. As the great African Saint Augustine of Hippo said, “Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote a book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?” Maybe the story of one of the pages of my own life will help explain what St. Augustine is saying.

One day I hopped into a taxi-cab and we took off for the airport on

my way home to Ghana. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean he was really friendly. So I asked, "Why did you just do that? This guy almost caused an accident and sent us to the hospital before I could catch the plane to see my family!" This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, "The Law of the Garbage Truck." He explained to me that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, full of disappointment and rage. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't pick up their garbage and spread it to other people in your life, whether at work, at home, or to people that you don't even know on the streets.

Always remember that good people do not let garbage trucks take over their day. Life is too short to wake in the morning with regrets, so...Love the people who treat you right and don't dwell on the ones who don't. Let us look at today's gospel more closely and ask ourselves, what does it mean for our lives? "The kingdom of God is at hand for us." How do we respond to Jesus' call to be His Disciples? This invitation today challenges us all. The Eucharistic banquet, which in today's world receives so few positive responses after so many invitations are issued, might be seen in our time as referring to the meal we celebrate each time we come to Mass. The menu, so to speak, is simple and miraculous. The Lord chooses this setting to nourish our minds and hearts with His Word, and our

bodies and souls with His Flesh and Blood.

There is a standing invitation, week after week, for this meal, which is held for our spiritual benefit. Yet, fewer people seem to accept this invitation, and many make excuses. We are too busy, or we are too tired today. Others show up, but perhaps arrive late or leave early. Jesus continues to invite us to celebrate God's love through the banquet of the Eucharist. Let us respond with love, humility, and gratitude. Let us come to the table of salvation and respond with our own invitation that He come more fully into our hearts.

One of the major milestones in gaining wisdom through the years is finally realizing that meaning is not something to be found in life, but is rather something we choose to give to our lives. Change in life is inevitable, but growth is optional. It is the path we choose that facilitates growth. I certainly will do it all over again, by the grace of God as I try to do His will in my ministry.



Blessings and peace to all.

Fr. Peter