

**Ordinary 24th Sunday Year B**  
**Mark 8:27-35**  
**September 13th, 2009**  
**NO BUTS ALLOWED**

Again the Church has provided readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospels that are spiritually revealing of the journey we are to follow.

Because there is so much to consider today, I plan to stick to my text BUT we will have to wait and see.

The Prophet Isaiah exclaimed God's message that a new covenant will be given to them BUT this prophecy continued by revealing that they will not accept God's gift.

The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy is manifested today in Mark's Gospel. In His way of teaching by asking a question, the disciples answered Jesus with comments of the crowds that have followed them on their journey.

With the opportunity then to declare their personal belief, Peter jumps right up and says "You are the Christ".

Peter the rock. He was the Apostle that stood firm in his love and faith in Jesus BUT he was also the one that questioned the foretelling of the passion and death of his Lord as well as denying Him three times in the courtyard.

Peter is the Saint that I most look to when I feel that my words or actions are either misunderstood or when I am truly off course. Even with these missteps, Jesus continues to strengthen Peter's faith and courage until he is able to build Christ's Church that began on Pentecost.

Peter correctly decreed Jesus as the Christ BUT he was chastised for questioning our Lord's revelation of His passion and death. This verse tells it all:

"You are not thinking as God does BUT as humans do".

Determining a theme of our readings, I came to the supposition that the Old Testament verses represent an internal value of faith. God spoke to the Israelites thru prophets and judges and Kings to remind them of their special position as His chosen ones. For these early generations, this was enough for them to believe.

The Gospel verses we heard explain or fulfill God words with the Word of God. The Messiah is now in their midst. This new covenant of the Son of God is the Divinely Human gift as our model to maintain the faith that we need to keep the Church alive. Our Salvation is assured by emulating the forgiveness and love of Jesus, our Lord.

From the Letter of James, the selection for our New Testament reading, we take the Old Testament theme of faith in God and the New Testament recognition of Jesus to the next level. James represents a type of Christianity that emphasized sound teaching and responsible moral behavior. More specifically, the behavior expected of the Jewish Christians during these times of condemnation and persecution.

This is a strong and direct letter, inspired during the building of the Catholic communities.

The Letter of James is sound and responsible teaching for everyone in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as well. Amazingly, this work is just as relevant 20centuries after it was authored.

Take the first verse of today's reading: "What good is it if someone says he has faith BUT does not have works?" Further on we are questioned about knowing that the poor are still going without proper food and shelter. Does verbalizing concern of their plight provide for their necessities? I know they are there BUT what can I possibly do to eradicate poverty and homelessness.

While reviewing the text of this homily on my computer monitor, one word stood out like a sore thumb. That word is "BUT". I even started out stating that I wanted to stick to my text BUT I didn't make any promises. Remember??

To me this is a small BUT powerful word in the way it is used in our vocabulary. When BUT is used in a conversation the phrase leading up to it is qualified and may be even contradicted by the statement following it.

The Buckeyes should have won that game last night BUT the team just didn't execute very well.

The Jewish community believed God's words BUT they did not believe the Word of God.

We have all allowed our Buts to get in the way of our daily and spiritual lives.

I want to volunteer at WARM or SVDP BUT I don't have a lot of time right now.

I am a good Catholic BUT I don't totally believe in the real presence in the Eucharist.

It seems to me that if we say what we believe or state a truth up front we would not need to use this qualifying word at all.

Let's say there's a personal concern. I'm really tired in the mornings BUT I can't get to bed any earlier. Change this thought to: I'm really tired in the mornings AND SO I'm going to turn the TV off at 10pm from now on.

Spiritually, you might think, I can't get a thing out of Dcn. Mickey's homilies BUT they are nice and short. Make it: I can't get a thing out of Dcn. Mickey's homilies and so I will just concentrate on a phrase or comment that is relevant to me right now.

In your relationship with God will you feel love for Him because of His gifts BUT then tend to withdraw as troubling times enter your life, or will you love Him AND increase your faith life as you thank Him for the graces to overcome life's problems and hardships.

When any situation occurs that includes a BUT, imagine taking Peter's place as Jesus says: You are thinking as humans do BUT you should be thinking as God does.

If you rest on your BUTS, God's plan for your Salvation will take longer.

None of us want that, so now may just be the time to Start kicking BUTS!