

Deacon Wadas Homily August 21, 2011

The next time you are looking for a good book to read, go to the library. But don't go to the adult section of the library. Go to the children's section. There you'll find a book written by Susan Balika and Craig Boldman. I won't tell you the title of the book because that would give my story away.

The book is about a little boy, whom we'll call Bobby.

Bobby tells us about his four best friends.

First, there's Jimmy. Jimmy and Bobby go on imaginary trips to the moon. But sometimes Jimmy visits his grandmother and leaves Bobby all alone. This makes Bobby very sad.

Second, there's Jamie. Jamie and Bobby used to color pictures and tape them on the refrigerator door for everyone to see. But recently Jamie moved and Bobby misses her very much.

Third, there's David, David and Bobby spend hours together building houses out of wooden blocks. There's only one problem. Sometimes they fight and David goes home leaving Bobby all alone.

Finally, there's Bobby's best friend. This friend never leaves him. He never moves to a different city. He never gets mad and goes home. He always stays at Bobby's side. For example, in summer they lie on the grass together and discuss where clouds come from. In winter they slide down hills together on a sled in the crunchy white snow.

By now you are probably wondering who Bobby's special friend is. To learn who it is, you have to turn to the last page in the book. There you will find a picture of Bobby's special friend. It's Jesus. The book ends with Bobby asking the question of the reader: "Do you know my special friend, Jesus?"

I like that story because it leaves the reader with the same important question that Jesus leaves His hearers with in today's Gospel: "Who do you say that I am?"

Bobby answered Jesus' question by saying: "You are my special friend. You never leave me. You never move to another city. You never get mad and go home, even when I do something wrong. You stay at my side no matter what happens. You are always there to help me."

This brings us back to the important question that Bobby asks at the end of the book: "Do you know my special friend, Jesus?" It leaves us with the important question that Jesus asks us in today's Gospel: "Who do you say that I am?"

If we have trouble answering Bobby's question or if we have trouble answering Jesus' question then maybe Jesus is speaking to us in a special way in today's Scripture readings.

Maybe He's inviting us to get to know Him better. Maybe He's inviting us to get better acquainted with Him. Maybe He's inviting us to enter into a special friendship with Him.

When we want to get to know someone better, when we want to enter into a special relationship with someone we arrange to meet that person. We schedule specific times and specific places to be with him or her. Well, the same procedure holds if we want to get to know Jesus better. We arrange to meet and talk with Him on a regular basis. We schedule specific times and places to be with Him.

We call these meetings daily prayer.

Daily prayer is simply taking time out of our schedule on a regular basis to meet with Jesus and get to know Him better. It is simply setting up a priority where we set aside some time each day to become better acquainted with Jesus.

In his book *Hungry for GOD*, Ralph Martin writes:

"A real estate man I know gets up early in the morning to pray; an aerospace engineer prays and reads the Scripture on his lunch hour; a production manager of a computing firm prays after his children are in bed at night."

Martin goes on to say that the demands of modern life are such that if we don't have a schedule for prayer we probably won't pray. When something becomes important to us, we don't leave it to chance. We schedule it right into our day.

The same is true if we want to get to know Jesus better. Unless there is a commitment to fixed times of prayer, we probably won't pray. That is just the way we humans are made.

This brings us back to the original question that Bobby asked us at the end of the book. "Do you know my special friend, Jesus?" if our answer to Bobby's question is "Not as much as I would like to know Him." Then just maybe Jesus is speaking to us today through the Scripture Readings.

Maybe He is inviting us to take time out of our busy schedule to meet Him on a daily basis to get to know Him better.

Maybe He is inviting us to begin spending a few minutes each evening reviewing our day with Him and asking Him what He thinks of it.

Maybe He is inviting us to begin spending a few minutes each evening speaking to Him about our hopes, our dreams, our doubts, and our problems.

Maybe He is inviting us to begin a practice of meeting with Him daily in prayer.

Maybe He is inviting us to discover what little Bobby discovered.

Maybe He is inviting us to discover that He is indeed "our special friend," just waiting to enrich our lives in ways that we never dreamed to be possible.