

Reflection by Ms. C. A. Riley, OP on the beginning of the first letter of the apostle John and from the commentary on the second letter to the Corinthians by St Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop, given this day 17 May 2020.

John is telling the reader that this is what Christ taught them and in turn they are teaching it to us. The thing that I never realized is that they had Christ in the flesh, they were able to see him with their eyes, to feel Him with their hands, to hear Him with their ears, and so on. Saint Cyril tells the Corinthians that Christ had to come in the flesh, so he could die for our sins, but he was not subject to the corruption of the flesh, and that we too are free from the conditions of the corruptibility if we live like Christ.

When I first read these readings, it reminded me of the opening paragraph of a book I have just recently begun reading. The book is "The Imitation of Christ," and the first paragraph begins: "He That followeth me, walketh not in darkness," saith Our Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we must imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart (John 8:12).

The challenges that we have today are not any different than those they experienced in John's time when Christ walked with the apostles and again in St Cyril's time, when they were learning the teachings of the apostles. We today are called to rely on our faith, belief, and trust that Christ is present in us thru our baptism.

It is imperative to understand what Baptism truly means. It is the undoing of original sin for each of us. Saint Paul saying is absolutely true that "when anyone is in Christ he becomes a completely different person: his old life dies, and a new life has begun." We are Baptized into Christ's death in the flesh, and what does this mean? Each of us are cleansed from sin body and soul.

We are called to imitate Christ even in the worst situations we face in our times. The Covid-19 pandemic has given me a better understanding of what others around the world face even in our modern time. We have been quarantined to our homes with limited interaction with others, we have gone for weeks without a physical Mass, the Eucharist, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and reconciliation. I now have a greater understanding of what it means to yearn for God.