

**Encounter Jesus**    Fourth Week of Lent    Saturday, March 17, 2018    8:15 AM    Jer  
11:18-20;    **Jn 7:40-53**    (St. Patrick, bishop)    (We can ask a lot of people's help; ultimately  
though it's up to us because it's our soul in question and therefore our judgment.)

**“Then each went to his own house.”**

There is a way which this particular passage throws us back upon ourselves, and there is a way in which the whole New Testament throws us back on ourselves because **who answers the question: Who is Jesus? It's each of us that must answer that.**

Now here we have various believers; they are believers, and they have their Scriptures and they interpret them. But in one way they become a prisoner of their own interpretation. **Their interpretation is more important to them than the experience of actually meeting Jesus and listening to him**, which was Nicodemus's suggestion. But they don't want that suggestion; they don't need that suggestion because they already know. And they already know because they have read their Scriptures.

But what they don't know is that **their Scriptures are open to many different interpretations**. Indeed the four evangelists found various ways of interpreting all the Scriptures pointing exactly to Jesus as the Messiah, the very thing that these others here could not do using the very same Scriptures. This should tell us something about Scripture and its interpretation. **If we allow ourselves to be locked into a particular interpretation, we are inhibiting our own spiritual growth** and possibly our spiritual well-being and even our spiritual destiny.

It is essential that we first of all **encounter the person of Jesus for ourselves, and the Holy Spirit for ourselves**, and let the Spirit, who is our teacher, teach us. Why? Going to I John, the First Epistle of John: why should we need other teachers? Well, of course we need help—that's true. But **ultimately we have to decide to whom we should listen**. And we have to decide **how we are going to interpret the Scripture. We can ask a lot of people's help; ultimately though it's up to us because it's our soul in question and therefore our judgment**. Who is the Christ? **Who is Christ to us?** Who is Jesus of Nazareth? We have to answer those questions for ourselves. And we can only do that when we actually let ourselves encounter this Jesus of Nazareth, this Christ raised from the dead, this Holy Spirit. And if we refuse that encounter, woe to us.