

## **Homily: Oct 28, 2021**

By Fr. Virgil Petermeier, osc

“To you who are called, to you who are dear to God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ, may all mercy and peace and love be with you all!”

This greeting comes from the opening of Apostle Jude’s short letter. We gather to celebrate two apostles of our Savior, Jesus Christ—Simon and Jude. We know nothing about Simon—only his name. Jude is quoted once by John from the scene of the last supper, when he responds to Jesus’ exhortation to love him. Jude asks, “Lord, what is all this about? Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

Jude seems to intimate that Jesus is too great to be known only by this small group of apostles. The whole world needs to know about Jesus. So, this celebration of Simon and Jude is once again a moment to reflect on whether and how Jesus is the important capstone of our personal life, of the life of our community, including ultimately, the community of the world-wide church and the world.

At times we are oblivious or forgetful of how important Jesus is for our lives. So we call out...Lord, have mercy.

I invite us to reflect on St. Paul’s crucial statement, which we just heard, “You are . . . fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with CHRIST JESUS himself as the CAPSTONE,” [“Cornerstone” is used in some versions of the Bible]. Paul invites us to imagine the structure—including an arch—which stands sturdy because of the capstone. Paul goes on to say, “You are being built together into a dwelling place of God...,” (Ephesians 2:19-22). Paul is talking about us as Church being held together by Capstone Jesus.

But we know that each and every stone in that arch is oriented toward and dependent upon that capstone. Those stones symbolize us personally. Jesus is the capstone of our individual lives as well. This happens when we finally realize that Jesus’ love reveals the essence of life—the life of every human being personally and as humankind. In other words, God’s love is the essence of the life of all creation—the capstone of the universe. All this can turn into platitudes or clichés unless we are regularly in touch with how Jesus became and still remains the CAPSTONE of our life. When did you and I finally realize that---in the most astounding way, and hopefully in many different and lesser ways thereafter? When and how?

During my first year in a small village of 700 people in Papua, Indonesia, I struggled to deal with a time when a bows-and-arrows fight broke out among two sub-clans of the village. While preparing a Sunday homily during that difficult time, it struck me more clearly than ever before, how important Jesus’ words and example of boundless mercy

and love are for peaceful and safe village life—forgiveness especially for the perceived enemy. In addition, I began to realize Jesus as the Capstone of my personal life during two major retreats in my life.

Preparing this homily today is an excellent moment for me to touch base with these critical moments of Jesus becoming the conscious CAPSTONE of my and our life. The other essential way for growing and deepening this faith-filled realization and conviction about Jesus as CAPSTONE is daily meditation on scripture, especially the Gospels. A weekly reflection on the up-coming Sunday's Gospel with a Bible reflection group—a crucial dynamic I participated in while in Papua, Indonesia, and now I experience every Thursday morning in a Zoom gathering with ten people from Phoenix, Twin Cities, MN and Portland, Oregon. I feel gifted by the various reflections on the Gospel, which helps grow my faith in Jesus as the CAPSTONE of my life – our life – the life of this world.

Jesus called the Twelve and us to become evangelizing disciples, convinced and on fire about the love of God, revealed in Jesus, as the CAPSTONE of life. May we grow to be such disciples.

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FINAL BLESSING (From St. Jude's letter verses 24-25) Respond with a resounding AMEN!

Glory be to him who can keep you from falling and bring you safe to his glorious presence, innocent and happy---AMEN!

To God, the only God, who saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord, be the glory, majesty, authority and power, which he had before time began, now and forever. AMEN!

May the blessing of God Almighty be upon you all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN!