**JOHN 10:31-42 Friday 3rd April 2020**

I find no difficulty in believing in the truthfulness of the Gospels because I honestly relate so easily to the description of human nature that is expressed in them! I know from my own experience how people - and in that word ‘people’ I include myself - are so quick to judge, to condemn and to kill with their words and actions. I know how we are capable of ignoring the 99% of good in someone and fixating ourselves on the 1%. Looking at it from the other side, we know that, even if we say and do the right things 99% of the time, we are so often reminded by other people of that one time we did not.

The Jews wanted to stone Jesus because He spoke like no other. He spoke in a way that held the attention of all who had ears and wished – begged - to understand. Jesus spoke in a way that had authority. Jesus spoke a sublime and illuminating word that the Pharisees and scribes could never do! Jesus spoke from the heart - and his enemies hated him for it!

In the end, his enemies picked up stones to kill him because he made himself God and they were unable to prove him wrong! *“You, a man, are making yourself God.”* Their minds could not accept that this amazing fact of God being among them in the form of a man could be true because the hardness of their hearts.

St. Augustine of Hippo said, ***“Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.”*** This was taken up again by Anselm of Canterbury who said the same thing, ***“I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe that I may understand***.”

There is, of course, so much good in Jesus. In fact, he’s all good. But those Jewish leaders had their minds fixated on the 1% that they could not understand. And it was questionable *only* because they were the ones who had covered their eyes to His miracles - they refused to believe what they saw. They were the ones that sought to make themselves better than the God they claimed to serve by twisting the truth and setting traps. But amazingly, as so often in John’s gospel, Jesus continued to walk in peace, eluding them in some miraculous way and escaping from their power and, of course, in the end the resurrection vindicated all that he had said.

Picking up stones and throwing them at others is something we learned to do as children, most likely by watching our friends or parents doing it to others. The Lord never picked up a stone. If he had, he would probably have turned it into bread. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to drop the grudges, anger and bitterness we hold onto and to convert our stony hearts to hearts made of flesh. Then, as we exercise our belief, our faith, we will come to see and understand the wonderful realities that God reveals in all people. For all of us are children of the same heavenly Father and he loves us all and we must love us all too.