

HOMILY ~ 5TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 9, 2025

How many of you have a GPS? How many of you use the GPS all of the time? I was really thankful for the GPS 21 years ago after I was ordained. I grew up on the east side and all of my assignments have been on the west side. When I first got to the west side, I had no idea where anything was. I also have to admit that I am directionally challenged, so I need it. And I trust it. Sometimes it takes me in a seemingly roundabout way, but I pretty much always get where I am supposed to be, so I just follow the instructions. It is not perfect, but it is the best guidance that I have. I trust it. How many of you trust your GPS?

In the Gospel reading, Jesus meets Simon Peter when he is finishing his day of fishing. After Jesus finishes speaking, he tells him to put out into deep water and lower his nets for a catch. Look what is happening here. Jesus, a carpenter, was telling a professional fisherman how to fish. What are the chances that a carpenter would know better than a fisherman how to fish? But Simon Peter trusted Jesus because he just followed his directions, and he caught an abundance of fish.

I think we have a lack of trust in our country today. Trust in all of our major institutions has been undermined. We do not know who to trust. I was listening to a podcast with Rachel Botsman, a leading expert on trust. She said that our culture likes transparency, but sometimes we get too much information and that undermines trust. We find one thing that is questionable or incorrect with a person or institution and we no longer trust them. Take the CDC for example. I trusted and followed the CDC during the pandemic. Using hindsight, they were not always right. I think they were providing the best guidance they could with the knowledge they had at the time. Based upon what we know now, some reforms are needed, but I continue to trust the CDC and follow them today because they are the best that we have. We should not have blind trust, but I trust the CDC more than random people on Google. I think we need to have people and institutions that we trust. Maybe we need to put some boundaries on that trust. We may trust institutions in some areas but not others. We may trust people in some areas but not others. For example, you can trust me when I talk about Church teaching. You probably should not trust me with directions because I am directionally

challenged, and I would be the first to tell you that. Each of us needs to decide for ourselves who or what we trust.

Do you trust the Church? The Church is not perfect. There is the human face of the Church and sometimes we get off track. The Church is not perfect but I think it is the best we have on issues of faith and morals. Where is a better place to go for guidance? And do you trust Jesus? Do you trust Jesus as Simon Peter did? Do you trust Jesus like you trust your GPS? Do you trust that Jesus has a plan for your life, that he loves you unconditionally, that he will never leave you alone and that he will help you regardless of your circumstances? It is easier to trust God when we are dealing with more routine things in our lives. When we have done things before and things have worked out it is easier to trust that they will again in the future. It is more difficult when things are more unknown. Sometimes I get the intuition that I am called to do something and I am not sure why. I have come to trust that God is guiding me through that intuition and just do it. When I feel called to do something that I have never done before and I am not sure I am going to be able to do it, trusting God is more difficult. When I am stepping out into the unknown and there is a significant risk of failure or negative consequences that is even more difficult. However, I have come to realize that if I am doing God's work, if I do the right thing, God has always helped me in the past and I trust that he will continue to do so in the future. Sometimes things unfold in a way that I do not expect or do not want, but I trust God and do my part. Trusting God is not without risk, but he is the best that I have. I trust Jesus.