

- One day St. John Vianney, who is the patron saint of parish priests, saw an old man sitting in his church with his attention focused calmly, but intently on the tabernacle.
- So St. John asked the old man what he was doing, to which the old man replied, “I look at Him, and He looks at me” – a simple response welling forth from the richness of a simple but sublime faith.
- This anecdote from the life of the holy priest of Ars has always edified and delighted me. This man had his priorities straight; he knew exactly where his focus should be. This old man of simple but profound faith understood what’s most important in this life.
- It’s knowing Jesus and living lives that reflect our knowledge of and belief in Him.
- In our epistle today good St. Peter exhorts us:

*Conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

- This is a powerful passage. First, St. Peter is reminding us that our time here on earth isn’t endless. We are sojourners in this world; it’s not our home. Our true home is in Heaven, but we can only go there if we spend our time here well!
- So, St. Peter reminds us what Christ has done for us: He has ransomed us from our sins, and not with gold or silver, but with His very own blood. Although He is eternal and existed before the foundation of the world, Jesus became one of us to save us.
- Thus, we cannot ignore Christ because He has given His very life for us. We must love Him and show Him our love by our reverence for Him. We must have faith in Him and hope in Him. We must make Christ the very focus of our lives.
- Thus, we need to listen for His voice, reminding ourselves that Christ is with us – even when we don’t recognize His presence – which is, ultimately, what our Gospel today calls us to do!
- The past two Sundays: Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, have shown us why we need to turn to Christ and make Him the focus of our lives, just like the old man in St. John Vianney’s church.
- Through His Paschal Mystery, that is, through His suffering, death, and resurrection, Christ Jesus has overcome sin and even death itself. He’s made salvation possible for us. And even more than that, our Lord desires to pour out His mercy upon us.
- In allowing the Roman soldier to pierce His heart so ruthlessly with a lance, our Lord not only opened up for us the Sacramental life of the Church, but He opened the floodgates of His mercy and compassion.
- Moreover, His mercy and compassion are for all people – most especially the worst of sinners. Those who have offended our Lord the most are the very people who have the greatest right to His mercy – if only we’re humble enough to seek it.

- That's one of the most incredible promises our Lord made to St. Faustina in His apparitions to her. The worst sinners have the most right to His mercy – which means that all of us should feel confident to approach Him.
- Yet the question remains: are we growing closer to our Lord in this Eastertide? Or have we slipped back into the old ways we had before Lent? Now that Lent is over and Easter is past, what is the focus of our lives?
- With most of us being so busy, it's easy to get distracted and to prioritize earthly matters over spiritual matters. It's easy to get sucked into endless scrolling on social media or seek the comforts of binging on Netflix.
- Yet, those things don't improve our spiritual lives, and so often they hurt our spiritual lives. So, we must be intentional about focusing on Jesus, most especially in this Easter Season when we're given every reason to love and honor our Lord.
- With all that being said, let me give you a few suggestions on how to focus on our Lord and draw closer to Him.
- First of all, if you don't have time set aside in your day for silent prayer, make time – even if it's only 15 or 20 minutes to stay with Christ and listen to Him. For most people, doing this first thing in the morning before the day gets away from you is best.
- Read Scripture, especially the Gospels. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read. And meditate on Christ's humanity, which was the battleground for our salvation.
- As the prophet Isaiah tells us, it's by His wounds that we are healed. We're redeemed because Jesus, as man, allowed Himself to be punished so cruelly, even unto death.
- Had our Lord not taken on our human flesh and become man, we would not be saved – not to mention all the other wonderful things Christ did as a man on this earth.
- So, meditating on His humanity draws us into the mystery of our redemption and fosters within us a greater love and appreciation for our Lord.
- When you're able, come to Adoration and be with our Lord present in the Eucharist! If you can commit to an hour each week, it'll change your life.
- Next, look for ways to imitate Christ and serve those in need. Give to the poor. Check up on elderly neighbors or call those whom you know are all alone right now.
- And make amends with anyone with whom you may be at odds. Bury any hatchets that need burying and to reconcile with others, for forgiving others is a pre-requisite for obtaining our Lord's forgiveness.
- And again be especially mindful of how you treat our Lord in the Eucharist. It is not simple bread and wine we consume when we come to Holy Communion. It is our Lord's body, blood, soul, and divinity.
- Be intentional, be focused when you come forward to receive the Eucharist. And receive our Lord in the most reverent way that you can, for our piety fosters deeper love for our Lord, and it can help edify others.
- Brothers and sisters, do not let this Eastertide pass you without drawing closer to our Lord and growing in holiness. This we can do by turning to Him, abiding with Him, listening to Him, and imitating Him.
- May Jesus always be the focus of our lives.