

JANUARY 18, 2026 FATHER PETER JAE CHOI

Once upon a time there was a beautiful monastery located on top of the mountain and the only way to get to the monastery was through a swaying basket tied to a single rope and pulled up by several monks. A man who was visiting this monastery nervously sat on top of the swaying basket. And seeing how old and frayed the rope was he nervously asked one of the monks “how often do you change the rope?” “Oh, whenever it breaks!” The truth is we live in a broken world, with broken homes and fractured relationships. We live in a world that needs a saviour!

Frank comes to Mass at my parish and he works as a fireman with the City of Vaughan. A few months ago he received an “Ontario Bravery Medal” from Lieutenant Governor. Here is the backstory of how he ended up receiving this medal. About two years ago he was visiting an apartment complex for a routine inspection. He was wearing just his ordinary uniform, which meant that he didn’t have any safety gear with him at that time. During his inspection a fire alarm went off. He located the unit where there was smoke coming out of the apartment. He quickly evacuated the residents from the building and had the superintendent of the building unlock the door of the apartment that was on fire. As soon as he opened, he saw a thick cloud of smoke. So he quickly closed the door and called for the back up. Just then, the superintendent’s phone rang. It was the mother of the lady whose apartment was on fire. She called because she knew her daughter was trapped inside. So the superintendent begged Frank to go in and check one more time. As Frank entered into the thick smoke, he had no visibility and he was suffocating from carbon monoxide. He yelled “Anybody here?” But there was no answer. He came back out to the hallway to catch his

breath. Frank said to the superintendent, “I don’t think anybody’s in there.” The super replied, “She’s definitely in there! Please save her!” He went back in, and this time he walked over to the living room and then to the bedroom. And there she was, lying on the floor unconscious. He grabbed her and started to carry her to safety. By this time carbon monoxide already poisoned him and he was feeling dizzy and about to pass out. He knew if he passed out both of them would die. With all his might he fought for both of their lives with each step. By the grace of God, he made it out alive. He had to be taken to emergency and when he recovered, the doctor told him that it was a miracle that he survived. Frank risked his life in order to save another person’s life. He ran into the fire while everybody else ran from it. In the same way, while we try to run from our life’s struggles and pain, Jesus embraced the cross and sacrificed His life in order to save ours.

In today’s gospel, John the Baptist told Andrew and John that, “Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” They would have immediately understood what that meant. Jewish people even to this day celebrate the Passover meal to commemorate the exodus of ancient Israelites from slavery in Egypt. When the ancient Israelites were being enslaved in Egypt and the Egyptian Pharaoh refused to let them go, God commanded each family to sacrifice a lamb and smear the blood of the Lamb on their doorposts and lintel. When the angel of death sees the blood it would pass over the house, sparing their first born sons. It was the blood of the lamb that saved them from death and liberated them from slavery. We see in the death of Jesus the fulfillment of the Old Testament symbol of the lamb sacrificed to save the Israelites. It was His sacrificial death that redeemed humanity from the slavery of sin and death.

Andrew and John, who were disciples of John the Baptist left him and started to follow Jesus. When Jesus saw them following Him, He asked them, “What are you looking for?” “Where are you staying?” they asked. After spending the day they came to a realization that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. What Andrew and John were looking for was God. Have you ever asked yourself the same question? “What am I looking for in life?”

Last summer I had an opportunity to catch up with one of my former professors from the seminary. I don’t know how we ended up talking about life’s crisis. But that’s what we were talking about. We talked about how we navigate through the earlier part of our life, our teenage years trying to find our identity: “Who am I? What do I want to do with my life?” Then between the 40’s to 60’s we go through a midlife crisis. During the midlife crisis we ask ourselves this question: “What is the meaning and purpose of my life?” Then finally, as we grow older we may go through a personal legacy crisis and ask ourselves: “What have I done with my life? Is this how I want to be remembered by others?” There’s a famous song from the 80’s “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for” by U2. We can go through our entire life not finding answers and living an unfulfilled life. So, where can we find the answer? Jesus! You see in Jesus we find our true identity, beloved child of God who has been called to live forever in God’s heavenly Kingdom! In Jesus we find our true calling! God called Isaiah to be a prophet to gather His people and lead them to Himself. God called St. Paul to radically reform his life and become His apostle! God gave them the mission and purpose in life. We achieve greatness not reinventing ourselves, but following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Every product comes with an instruction manual, and that's because the manufacturer knows the product better than anybody else. Many years ago a man was driving in a Ford Model T and his car broke down. He got out of the car and opened the hood and was having trouble trying to fix it. Just then another Ford Model T pulls right behind him. A distinguished gentleman wearing a very nice suit came out carrying tools from his car and made a quick adjustment and got the car running right away. He was shocked that such a distinguished gentleman knew the car so well. He thanked the gentleman and asked, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Henry Ford, I created this car." Because God created us, He knows us better than we know ourselves. We may have made plans for our future, but God has the perfect plan for each and every one of us. In God we find all the answers we are looking for. So, let us go to God. He knows us. He has the perfect plan.