

Does anyone remember when a new game came along, that was a big hit called TRIVIAL PURSUIT? It actually was created in Montreal, Quebec in 1979 and released to the world in 1981. In 1984 it sold 20 million sets in the US. I don't know if many people play that game much anymore, but it was kind of popular. I bring this game up because it makes a great point that we need to understand about ourselves and who we think we are, and what we think we're worth, and how we relate to one another! More about that in a moment.

When I first learned about the game I was like "YEAH! Time to make some hay! YEAH!" Well, then we played with our friends in seminary. So, my turn comes up, I draw the little card and it asks "*Name the hit tune from the 1937 Broadway Musical **That Duck Has Blue Shoes.***" I would sit there feeling like the dumbest guy in the world, because I had never heard of any Broadway Musicals, especially not one called That Duck Has Blue Shoes! How many of you are familiar with that musical? Well, actually, I made it up, on purpose, to make a point. Sometimes we act like it's a big thing when we know something that someone else does not know. How strange. God gives us this incredible brain and memory system, and we spend our lives learning and growing, and hopefully becoming wise. We learn things, we experience things, but then too often in our seemingly innate human insecurity we act like others are lacking something if they don't know what we stumbled upon in life and know!

Whenever we play some kind of game like Trivial Pursuit, often we have competitive genes that kick in and we take it

personally, like “I have to win this thing, I have to beat my friends, I have to show that I know the most!” Wow. Is there anything wrong with that kind of a feeling? The last time I checked, we are not the sum of our knowledge. In fact we are NOT a lot of things. We are not equal to our possessions, to our property, to our checking account or stock market jazz. Sometimes we think maybe we are who we are based on what we know? Well, as the great musical **That Duck Has Blue Shoes** shows us, much of what we know is a fluke and it is not consequential. By now you are wondering where I might be leading you. We are getting there, so hang on. We are getting ever closer to our ice cream!

In our lesson for today from 1 Corinthians 13, we have some words that make great sense inside of this book we call 1 Corinthians. The Corinthians were all concerned about KNOWLEDGE and making sure that they had more of it than the guy down the street. Paul is very concerned about all these ways that the people were trying to act like they were better than someone else, based on some knowledge that they had. For the people in the church in Corinth, if you didn't know what they knew, then you were not as great as they were! So Paul tries to calm them down on all this. Let me re-read our passage here:

*“For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now*

*we see in a mirror dimly ( or a glass darkly ), but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”*

These are profound words, especially as Paul wrote them to people long ago who were hung up on what they knew and how they thought that made them better than everyone else! *I know this, so I am more than you are!*

This idea for a message came from a great little article in **The Christian Century**, a clergy magazine I dearly love. Peter Marty, whom I have mentioned before, wrote this wonderful little 1-page essay. He asks the question “Does us knowing something that someone else does not know, does that somehow make us more special, or does it mater at all?” Let me read a great direct quotation from his article which starts with something you might not have heard of before:

*“Bernard of Clairvaux, (a French Catholic monk who died in 1153, who was an important spiritual leader of the Church), he writes of people who seek knowledge for the sake of curiosity. He writes of other people who seek knowledge to serve and edify their neighbor through love. But still other people, says Bernard, “desire to know in order that they themselves may be known: that is vanity.”*

What motivates us to know and to learn? Do we learn because we are curious? I hope so. Being curious is a good thing. Bernard suggested that some people learn in order to serve and edify or build up other people. That is a great reason to want to learn! But then we have the stinker reason: you want knowledge

so that you can show off in front of others, so that they would pause and comment about how smart you are. And old Bernard hits it right on the head in saying, **this is vanity**. He's right.

Peter Marty doesn't come out and say this quite this way, but I think he would agree with this concept. Here's an idea: Let's play Trivial Pursuit, and instead of acting like we are big stuff if we happen to know an answer to some crazy question, instead of doing that, maybe we could sit together and have all of us involved share what we know for the good of the group! Rather than get puffed up because we could answer a weird thing about an obscure Broadway Musical, share our answers together so that we all can learn, if it is really something worth knowing. Peter Marty, in his article, suggests that this is how we should do things in the Church. It is not about what we might know as individuals, but it might work a lot better if we were to share what we know in order that we all would learn and be built up by that information, hopefully leading to some calm wisdom.

In this month of July, there are important things to learn about, things that have to do with the life that is all around us in these times. Instead of people shouting at each other, and getting in each other's faces, maybe it would be helpful if we could share some important things with each other. As Christians we do not have it all figured out. Maybe we can share a little about what we have found along the journey so far, knowing that we only see through a glass darkly right now. That knowledge should keep us humble and gentle, never getting in someone else's face, or suspecting that we are somehow better

than others who don't know what we know! There is so much for us to learn that matters. There are other things that might not matter as much. But we need to learn as the Church, the Body of Christ, that we know very little, but that we know best when we know together, and it is not some kind of status thing or competition. We should know as much as we can so that others might learn and be built up in faith and wisdom. In these days of mistrust and anger, we need to find a way to calm things down and shed more light than heat. May God's goodness surround us, and the presence of God's Spirit give us calm humility and the desire to learn so that we can find some wisdom for life, and share it with others. AMEN.