

I started Boot Camp the week before Lent 1995.

Holy Week came around the end of Basic Training, and when a posting was put up saying that there would be a Penance Service at the chapel, I signed up.

This of course led to an interesting event – I was immediately called into the Drill Instructor's offices, and all three DI's began questioning me ... what did I do? I could tell them ... what was so bad that I had to talk to a priest about it?

They were nearly freaking out.

I told them that it was normal to celebrate Penance as a sacrament before Easter, and that I hadn't done any deep dark secret bad thing that they should worry about. Rather, I had done the usual cussing, backbiting, whining, and gossiping that Sailors are very prone to.

When they were satisfied that I hadn't killed anyone, they let me go. But that incident led me to be a bit "low-key" about religious things while I was in the Navy.

Several years later, after I had left the service, a colleague from the Navy called me. He had gone through some tough times, and had never been any religion. But after those difficult times, he had decided to become Catholic. And one of his reasons was that he wanted what he'd seen in my life ... so that he could better handle the rough times.

Despite trying to be low-key, it would seem that my "secret" was out.

In the Gospel, we hear about Jesus going about His business, and healing people. Yet even when He leaves to go off for some solitude and time for prayer, people find Him.

Which brings up two points for our own reflection:

(1) Can people "find" Jesus in us? Does our life and our practice of our Catholic faith reflect the Christian life ... the life of Jesus in a way that is obvious – even if we aren't trying to show it off?

and

(2) Are we willing to seek out Jesus in our own difficulties of life? Is our first recourse to solve a problem our way – or do we bring Christ into the picture immediately?

As we approach this altar today, let us ask for the grace to "let our light shine" in the ordinary events of our day ... and for ourselves, ask Jesus to come into the problem areas ... even the dark areas ... of our lives and receive the transforming power ... the healing power ... of the Holy Spirit in the graces that flow from the Eucharist.