

5th Sunday of Easter
May 15, 2022
“Encouragement and Hope in a Turbulent World”

Acts 14:21-27
Rev 21:1-5
Jn 13:31...35

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

No one will deny that we live in a turbulent world. We hardly know from one day to the next what new problem or crisis we might have to face. Coupled to this is the fact that some violent and selfish people deliberately cause problems for everyone else.

Nevertheless, what is so encouraging and helpful during these trying times are the really good people. These folks always do their best to be helpful in every situation. They are kind – they are considerate – they know how to listen. They make time for others. They refuse to get angry, use harsh words, or ever slam the door and walk away!

They do not judge or condemn others. Instead, they look for the wounds that mean, unkind, and violent people carry within themselves. And they seek for ways to heal those wounds.

However, we must remember that these good people have not escaped suffering and hardship in their own hearts and lives. But they have not allowed these, sometimes, terrible things to destroy them or make them less!

We are always blessed when we encounter these people. We are doubly blessed if we can, somehow, be part of their life! More often than not, we experience them in an act of courtesy, a kind word, a generous gesture – something in passing that touches our heart and soul! These are the people who are truly following the new commandment of Jesus.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us that his new commandment is that we love one another. We are to love one another as he has loved us. Jesus loved us to the extent that he died for us. He died so that we could live forever – after our life here.

Furthermore, the mark of true disciples would be the love they have for one another. This love must be extended to everyone in God’s creation. Because Jesus came for everyone and died for everyone.

Those who are always kind, considerate, and loving are authentic disciples of Jesus. This is true whether they know it or not! They are called “Anonymous Christians”. Grace has touched them – and they bring that graciousness to others.

True disciples have also learned what Paul and Barnabas discovered in today’s reading from Acts: “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” These hardships can be life today in a turbulent world – They can be the difficulty, suffering, and pain of our personal lives – They can be the sacrifice we must make to be kind, considerate, merciful – and always trying to do the loving thing for others.

St. John also gives us encouragement and hope from the revelations he received while in exile. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. There will be something more than what we have here – because we were made for something more! There will be a whole new world order – But it will not be the one sought by the powerful – by those who wreak havoc and cause the turbulent times we experience today. Instead, it will be God’s dwelling with the human race.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, in that new world, God will heal the wounds of our souls and spirits. God will destroy death with an everlasting life. That new life will be free of mourning, crying out, or pain. It will be a life filled with joy and peace and love!

That wonderful existence will be for those who lived a life of kindness and love during their time here. For in loving and serving others, they have loved and served both Jesus and God – who are present in everyone.

And so, let us pray, that we are better able to live
this new commandment of Jesus.

May we love as he has loved.

And, thus, may we extend this love to everyone we encounter!

Amen.

May 15, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra