

3rd Sunday of Easter
May 1, 2022
“Solidarity in the Risen Christ”

Acts 5:27-32
Rev 5:11-14
Jn 21:1-14

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Solidarity is a powerful force. It is all the more powerful if people are united for something that is true and good and just. People in solidarity with one another work together. They support one another. And if their cause is just, they can almost always triumph.

The Solidarity Movement in Poland started in the 1980's. Labor Union members aligned against the Communist dictatorship – and won! In the 1990's it brought about freedom from Russian control altogether.

A present day example of solidarity is the resistance of the people of Ukraine against Vladimir Putin. Ultimately, the Ukrainians will prevail, even though Putin takes over the country. Because, even if seemingly defeated, that solidarity will never be destroyed – because its cause is right and true and just!

I mention the foregoing, because it was their solidarity that kept the apostles and disciples together after the death of Jesus. They had lived with the Master for three years. And when the forces of evil killed Jesus, they stayed together for mutual support at a very dangerous time.

The Resurrection took them by surprise. The appearance of the Risen Jesus, no doubt, overwhelmed them. But Jesus was not with them as he was before. Consequently, needing something to do – as well as some immediate income – they decided to go fishing. And it was then that Jesus revealed himself to them once again.

After their unsuccessful night, Jesus was waiting for them on the shore. At his direction, they re-cast their net. And they were rewarded with a miraculous catch of fish.

Once ashore, they shared a meal with Jesus. Gradually, they began to understand that Jesus would continue to be with them – However, he would be present in a new and different way. Furthermore, they would have a new vocation in the years ahead. They would pass on what Jesus had brought to them from his Father. They would also be in solidarity, with Jesus, with one another, and with everyone who embarked upon the Gospel way of life.

That solidarity is manifested in the passage from the Acts of the Apostles. The apostles had been previously warned against continuing the message and the work of Jesus. However, they refused to obey the misguided Jewish religious establishment.

When they were arrested a second time, the Sanhedrin was furious. In the passage that is omitted, the majority wanted to kill the apostles. But a lone Pharisee, Gamaliel, intervened. He reminded them that if this new movement was from God, it would be indestructible. The leadership would be fighting God Himself!

So the Sanhedrin relented. They released the apostles, but only after having them flogged. This is the reason that the apostles rejoiced – They had begun to suffer as Jesus did!

From that time on, they began to spread the message of Jesus everywhere they journeyed. For their solidarity united them with the Risen Lord Jesus – as well as with the Father and the Holy Spirit!

On the island of Patmos, St. John was given a vision of the great solidarity that exists in the Kingdom of God. Jesus is the God-Man who brings all things together. As the Father's Son, he embraced our humanity to bring us into the divinity of God.

In John's vision, every rational being, angelic and human, praise and honor the Risen Christ. He was slain in his humanity, but raised up as the Lord of Life and as the Lord of the Cosmos – the Lord of all creation. And, together, all give glory to the Godhead which, somehow, also includes Jesus!

Brothers and Sisters, we are dealing, here, with mystery. All of this is beyond our poor power to comprehend in its fullness, if at all. But rest assured, we are not deluded. We stand in solidarity with all those believers who have gone before us – We stand with one another who are present here today – And we stand with all those others who will follow us – and who also will be in solidarity with us – All because of our steadfast faith and our commitment to the Gospel of Jesus!

So, let us pray, today, that we never waver in that steadfastness.

May we always support one another on our mutual journey to the Kingdom of Heaven!

Amen.

May 1, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra