

Pentecost Sunday
June 5, 2022
“Dealing with Our Duality”

Acts 2:1-11
Rom 8:8-17(B)
Jn 14:15...26(B)

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Whether we like to admit it or not, there is a powerful duality in every one of us. We all have two opposing sides – One side is positive – and open to goodness, truth, and beauty – The other side is negative – and prone to evil, deception, and the grotesque. This duality is even manifested in the two sides of our faces. The one side is pleasant – while the other side is not!

The sides of this duality are constantly at war within ourselves. They can influence everything we do – especially our relationship with others.

When we finally are able to see and admit the conflict within ourself, we, very often, turn to therapy. We seek out a wise counselor. We hope that they will be able to help us discover a pathway through the internal conflict we experience. Perhaps they can see the things and the truth we are missing about ourself – They might help us to become the more integrated person we really want to be.

Although seemingly complex, this duality is pretty simple. It is the conflict of good and evil within us. God created us out of His goodness and love. He created us to share in His own divine life. But our primal parents wanted to be gods themselves. They succumbed to Lucifer’s temptation and chose themselves over God – their way, instead of God’s way. And we continue to carry within us the effects of that rebellion over the ages!

Jesus came to bring us a way out of the dark side of that duality. Jesus came to show us that it was possible to live a life of goodness, truth, and beauty. Jesus modeled this life for us – and then he sent the Holy Spirit to be a guide for each of us. That Spirit would be there as we struggle through the difficulties we encounter every day of our life.

In today’s Gospel of John, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will help us remember and understand all that he said and did during his lifetime. However, to receive that Spirit, we must love in return for the love we receive from God, our Father, and Jesus himself. We must prove that love by keeping the commandments that Jesus brought to us from the Father.

St. Paul elaborates on this in his Letter to the Romans. Paul names the duality within us as the flesh versus the spirit. By “flesh”, Paul means all that is selfish and self-seeking. It is our choosing our own way and the ways of the world around us that are contrary to God’s ways and the Gospel of Jesus. And we can see this cult of the self everywhere we turn!

It is in our culture – in the media – in the entertainment industry – in most advertising – in the fashions that are worn – in the business world and the stock market – in our politics and in our governing bodies! This list can go on and on!

Sadly, too, many people are slaves to themselves – to their dark and sinful side. They fear the rejection that will come from breaking the written and unwritten code of the false ethics of the world! And so, Paul urges us to rise above that slavery – to become free in the Holy Spirit of God!

He also teaches that our physical bodies can be symbols of that dark side because they will die and decompose. However, our spiritual side will live forever in God’s glory if we choose the ways of Jesus and the Father. Living in the Spirit will bring new life to our material bodies. However, for this, we must put to death all the selfish deeds of sin!

Yet, there is even more. If we are led by the Spirit of God and not the self – we become God’s adopted children. And if we are God’s children, then we become heirs! We will inherit God Himself – and all that Jesus reclaimed, and gained, for us in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, we must remember that rising above our duality and conquering our dark side will bring us suffering. As Jesus fought against the evil and the darkness of his time and culture, so must we. Always standing for goodness, truth, and beauty will cost us – We will suffer, as Jesus suffered. Serving God and others means self-denial every day of our life. But with the guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit, it can be done. Moreover, our hearts and souls will be filled with a new freedom and peace!

So, let us pray that we can have the conviction and the willingness to live and serve in this enlightened way of the Holy Spirit!

Amen.

June 5, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra