

6th Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2020
“Trust and Love”

Acts 8:5-17
1 Pet 3:15-18
Jn 14:15-21

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Most of us are on guard whenever we meet someone new. This is something that seems natural for human nature. We are less on guard if the person we meet is introduced as a friend of someone we know well and trust – because we trust our friend’s judgment.

We, likewise, trust doctors and most clergy – at least until the recent abuse tragedy in the Church. They have our trust because the life and purpose of these professionals are to help others physically, on the one hand, and spiritually, on the other.

Another reason we trust doctors and clergy is because they are bound by confidentiality. Doctors can be sued and jailed for their failure in this area – and priests can be defrocked and removed from ministry for breaking the seal of confession!

The reason we are naturally guarded when we meet new people is to protect ourselves from any evil intent they might have. Any self-revelation leaves us potentially vulnerable. And revealing too much or too soon to the wrong person can, and often does, bring pain or hardship into our life.

It is just the opposite with people we know well and whom we also love deeply. Knowing another well means we have the experience of relationship. We know from experience if and where and what we would be best not sharing with them. However, when we come to love someone deeply, the depth of our sharing can know no limit, because we know they would do nothing to cause us harm.

Trust is ultimately based on love. Reciprocal trust is the product of reciprocal love. And the more that is entrusted out of love, the more any bond between two people grows – and the more that they can gift one another in so many ways.

This is what Jesus was trying to teach his disciples in the Gospel selection for today. If we love Jesus, we will keep his commandments. Moreover, all of his commandments can be reduced to his Great Commandment of love: “Love one another as I have loved you!” “After loving God with every fiber of your being, you are to treat every human being exactly as you would treat yourself!”

One of the bi-products of mutual love is the union of heart and soul with the beloved. Another is the creative giftedness that comes from the self-donation of love.

In the Trinity, the Father gives life to the Son, and the Son gives himself back in self-donation to the Father – their mutual love results in the Holy Spirit who is Divine Love personified! What is remarkable is that this eternal creative process is the very archetype of spousal love that, with God, brings a new child into being.

Today, Jesus also tells us that he sends this love to us as the Holy Spirit who becomes our Advocate. Thus, the Spirit serves as guide, director, and protector for us, as well as one who can speak to the Father on our behalf.

However, we must open ourselves to God’s will and plan for our lives in absolute trust. This means becoming someone who can bring hope to everyone we meet by becoming a blessing for them – For the way we treat them can become a blessing in some, perhaps even unknown, way.

St. Peter teaches us that we can bring hope to others by being candid and unafraid to share the reason and basis for our faith and our hope. But he also tells us that we must do this with a spirit of gentleness and reverence – respecting who they are and what they are prepared to accept. Moreover, we must also live godly lives, so as not to be at cross-purposes with what we say and do as disciples of Jesus and children of the Father. Then, even when others try to defame us – or the good we do – they will be seen for who and what they really are – which will, in turn, give us more credibility!

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice that we have a divine Father who, out of love, created us – a divine Son and brother who loved us and gave up his human life for us – and a Holy Spirit who is Advocate and divine guide who teaches us daily the infinite possibilities of love!

Amen.

May 17, 2020

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