



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Easter (C)
May 5, 2019

Showing Our Love

By Mary Katharine Deeley

It has become the habit in our family to say “I love you” at the end of phone calls and e-mails. I love these frequent reminders that I am valued and worthy of love, and I like the opportunity to remind my daughters and husband that they are the same. We underscore these reminders with little acts of love. Our daughters joke that my husband and I are the only parents they know who still date. And when we do go out, we take turns paying for the other’s dinner. My husband once sent me flowers when I didn’t get a job I had hoped for. It was a kind and thoughtful gesture.

In the Gospel, Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me” not once, but three times. When Peter responds positively (though progressively with more irritation), Jesus continues, “Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep.” It isn’t enough to say we love people. We show it by caring for them and for who and what they cherish. The best way that Peter could show his love for Jesus was by caring for the people of God. He could love all the disciples and invite others to follow Jesus as well.

Pope Francis once exhorted priests to “be shepherds with the smell of sheep.” Jesus is telling Peter—and all of us—much the same thing. To love the Lord is to truly live among his people: to touch them, tell them, and show them they are valuable and desired. This is the face of love.

All people deserve to know they are loved, but in our world that is not always the case. How might we respond? +

Sunday Readings

Acts 5:27–32, 40b–41

So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

Revelation 5:11–14

And [the angels] cried out in a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

John 21:1–19 or John 21:1–14

[Jesus] said to them, “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.”

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A Word from Pope Francis

May the Christian communities be sustained by the intercession and example of our many martyrs and saints who bore courageous witness to Christ and have themselves attained full unity. So what are we waiting for?... As his disciples, we are called to testify everywhere, with Christian fortitude, to his humble love.

—Address to a commission for theological dialogue, January 27, 2017



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I remember to tell family and friends that I love them? They want to know.
- Do my actions show love for all God’s people, indicating that they are valued and respected?

Treasuring God's Creation

By Kathy Coffey

Thou shalt reverence the earth.

If we were to add a commandment reflecting the call to God's people in our century, this might top the list of possibilities. People have long delighted in the beautiful surroundings for the human journey. But for the first time in history, our planet is gravely threatened.

While this commandment isn't one of the official ten, we have a long tradition of respect for God's creation. Genesis 1 shows God lovingly shaping the solar system, oceans, land, vegetation, and animals in a crescendo that leads to humanity. When God gives humans "dominion" over other creatures, the implication is wise stewardship rather than blatant exploitation.

Many psalms are suffused with an appreciation of nature. Psalm 96:11–13 personifies the natural world praising God: "Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them. Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice before the LORD."

Saint Francis' *Canticle of the Sun* is an outburst of joy in sun and moon. Saint Clare reminded her congregation to "praise God" when they saw "beautiful trees, flowers, and bushes..." Both saints traveled lightly; their commitment to poverty translates into the slogan



of environmentally conscious people today: "Buy less stuff."

Receiving Well

Each week, Catholics celebrate the Eucharist, whose root word means "to receive well." Our weekend celebrations should spill into a week of receiving well, especially

the earth's gifts: food that energizes our bodies, the sights of mountains, streams, stars, or sunsets that feed our spirits. As Rachel Carson wrote in *Silent Spring*, the absence of birdsong with all it represents would make our environment eerily quiet and rob the soul of sustenance.

With such a rich tradition of respecting the earth, we Christians should naturally take practical steps to reduce our carbon emissions and, hence, climate change. The scientific community agrees that we can take practical steps to save the planet now, to prevent our grandchildren from asking, "Why didn't they act when they could?"

Warning signs are clear: The polar ice caps are melting fast because dangerous gases trap the sun's heat. The average car driven 10,000 miles a year releases 5.5 tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Barbara Kingsolver points out in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* that our children will have shorter lifespans than ours because of their junk food, obesity, and poor quality of air and water.

We know how to solve this problem. Apologies to those who know these steps, but for those who don't: Use energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances. Drive a hybrid car. Walk or bike when possible. Recycle. Turn down the thermostat. Plant trees.

Actively Saying Thanks

Hopeful signs of community awareness and cooperation abound. More than a thousand US mayors have signed the Climate Protection Agreement to reduce carbon emissions in their cities. Many companies, churches, schools, and homes are committed to "going green." *Oikos*, the Greek word for "household" (the root for *ecology*, *ecumenical*, and *economy*) underscores the link between our individual households and God's house, creation.

In her novel *Animal Dreams*, Barbara Kingsolver records a conversation with a native American who explains that God lets us live in this house, and we should send a note of thanks just as we would after being anyone's guest: "We appreciate the rain, we appreciate the sun....Sorry if we messed up anything. Thanks for letting me sleep on your couch."

Reverencing the earth is an active way to express our thanks. +



Risen Lord, you gave your life to save the world. Help me to be a selfless servant of love and peace in the world.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 6-11

Monday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 6:8–15 / Jn 6:22–29

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 7:51—8:1a / Jn 6:30–35

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 8:1b–8 / Jn 6:35–40

Thursday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 8:26–40 / Jn 6:44–51

Friday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 9:1–20 / Jn 6:52–59

Saturday, Easter Weekday:

Acts 9:31–42 / Jn 6:60–69

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