

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
May 9, 2021  
“The Way of Jesus”

Acts 10:25...48  
1 Jn 4:7-10  
Jn 15:9-17

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

In the past several months the issue of racism has loomed large in politics and in the media. Several different ethnic groups have raised their voices in protest regarding the evils of racism. However, racism and discrimination have been a problem down through the ages of recorded history. It, no doubt, started between family groups – then tribes, then countries – and, finally, whole continents!

Underlying racism, class, and ethnic hostility – is fear. We fear the unknown – We fear the power another group might wield – We fear their different and unfamiliar customs, behavior, and special natural abilities. And, whatever we fear – we resist. We begin to see others as a threat to our ways, our thinking, our established customs and beliefs.

To counter this, different groups become hostile to each other – and the divisiveness is carried down from one generation to the next. Moreover, political leaders often exploit these divisions for their own advantage and gain!

However, racism was never in the plan of God. God created every human person “to show forth His goodness” – and to share with each one a kingdom of everlasting happiness. Thus, we are all God’s children – We are all called to the same eternal, divine life. And whether we want to admit it or not, we are all brothers and sisters in the marvelous family of the human race – with all of its wonderful diversity!

In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter discovered that God shows no partiality among races and religious groups. If anyone believed in God and lived a good life – they were in God’s favor. Peter had been given a symbolic vision that made him realize that all God’s creatures were good – despite his own limited understanding and racial bias. Consequently, when the Holy Spirit came upon those Gentiles who had searched for the truth – Peter realized that they must be incorporated into the Christian Community of Jesus!

In his Gospel and First Letter, St. John teaches us that the heart of the message of Jesus is love. The Son of God became a human person out of love. He lived a life of love. He died out of love for the whole human race. And, as Jesus was loved by the Father, we are, likewise, loved by Jesus – as brothers and sisters in the human family of God.

But there is even more. As the Son took our human life, he also raised us and incorporated us into his divine life with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But to possess this life, we must learn to love. We must love all of God's creatures. This includes every human person despite their race, religion, culture, color, or language! This was the Great Commandment of Jesus: to love everyone else, just as he loves each of us!

Moreover, we prove this love in the way we treat one another – in the good we do and the harm we avoid. Thus, no one can be enslaved in any way to another – or be looked upon as, somehow, inferior. Because we are not slaves ourselves, but friends of Jesus and the Father. Furthermore, in this same way, we must become friends with one another!

Jesus Christ was the “Great Equalizer” who came into the world. Jesus broke down all the barriers that Satan had established. He brought us together in a way that no one could have dreamed or imagined. And yet, the most difficult thing to learn is to love those who do not love us – to love our enemies. And like Jesus, we must never retaliate because of their hatred or ill will.

Love is the only lasting solution to any of the problems in the world. It is the answer to family disputes, personal disagreements, political polarization, national and international divisions, and all racial prejudice, gender inequality, ethnic superiority, cultural bias, and religious bigotry. Years ago, Telliard de Chardin put it this way:

“Someday, after mastering the winds,  
the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall  
harness for God the energies of LOVE.  
And then for the second time in the history  
of the world, man will have discovered FIRE.”

Brothers and Sisters, to love others the way that God loves us is, truly, a great challenge. It is the challenge of our whole human existence. It will require sacrifice and suffering. It probably will mean giving up much that made us feel secure. But it is the way of Jesus. Let us pray that it becomes our way!

Amen.

May 9, 2021

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