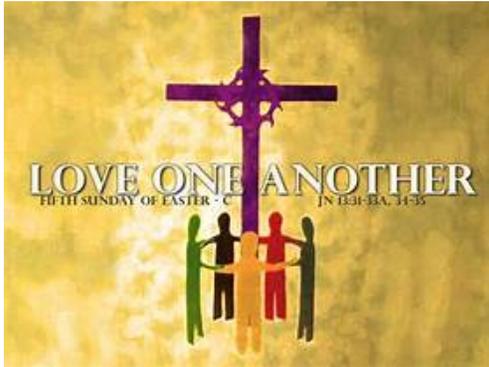


For The Bulletin Of May 19, 2019



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

From Father Robert

We continue to read from the Gospel of John during the Easter Season. This evangelist has unique things to say about Jesus, and he relates stories about Jesus not found anywhere else. Our gospel reading for today is a case in point. Other gospels have Jesus saying, “Love your neighbor,” or even “Love your enemies.” But today we hear the simple but profound command to “love one another,” which presumes that there are others in the community. In cases where semantics can open a debate about “who is my neighbor?” or how precisely we “love” an “enemy,” the command to love one another is straightforward and leaves little room for negotiation or explanation. Further, it is a command related to “one another,” which means those in the Christian community closest to us. In some senses it harkens to family, and the relationships we have with one another as family. It’s merely a plea for siblings to do more than “get along” but to actually “love one another.”

But Jesus goes further, pointing to the example He gave them as a model for

love: “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” In a few chapters, we will see that includes laying down His life for them. The disciples will be known by their love for one another. Our own displays of charity and acts of love will mark us as Christian.

To love one another is challenging. It can be easier and more convenient to go to church, or to sit in one’s room and pray. But love requires action and some doing. As is often said, “Love is a verb.” The image of a family comes to mind again as it can be easier to love those on the outside or the margins. But what about those familiar to us? We know their foibles, idiosyncrasies, annoying tics, and habits. We have a history with them. Yet, we are called, perhaps even reminded, to love one another.

For the Fourth Gospel, all ethical commands of Jesus may be summed up in this one command to love. Other than some references that seem to reflect the Ten Commandments (don’t steal, lie, covet) the Gospel of John has one overriding exhortation: Love.



Living The Paschal Mystery

Ghandi is reported to have said: “I love your Christ, but your Christians are not like Christ.” From this we might be

fairly sure that the Christians he encountered were not living up to the ideal reflected in today's gospel. That is certainly unfortunate. But what image of Christianity do we present by our actions? By our love? Do we love like Jesus did, to the point of laying down our life?

It can be easier to be consumed with external rituals or internal theological debates. But Jesus' command today is simply to love. In its simplicity, it is exceptionally difficult. Love knows no bounds. Love does not say, "That's enough." Love puts the needs of the other ahead of our own. And in our global society we see that vast numbers of peoples have more needs than we do. Where to begin? It is our life's calling as a disciple of Jesus to follow Him in the way of love. It's been said that a great journey begins with a single step. So we love one another and in doing so we become more devoted disciples of Jesus.

What did you hear in today's scripture passages? Did they resonate with you? To hear about the love of which John speaks in today's gospel is challenging to say the least.

- In the first reading, Barnabas and Paul minister to the fledgling Christian communities through prayer, fasting, and proclaiming the Good News. How do you support others in faith?
- Jesus gives us a new commandment: "Love one another." How do you show love for the people closest to you?
- When in your life have you needed to make a conscious

decision to act out of love? What helped you make this decision?

- Jesus says we will be recognized as His disciples by how we love each other. How loving is your family? Do you experience our parish as loving? What issues are you currently dealing with that might require an extra outpouring of love and charity?



About Liturgy: Proof of Discipleship

If you pay attention to Catholic websites, social media, or maybe even our diocesan newspaper, it probably doesn't take long for you to find mean-spirited comments about fellow Christians who hold different viewpoints than the writer's. Reading these articles and comments might lead us to believe that the proof of discipleship is measured by one's level of orthodoxy, obedience, liberalism, or whatever measuring stick you like.

However, today's gospel reminds us that the proof of discipleship is not how right we are but how loving we are. If we are to follow Jesus' commandment to love one another as He has loved us, there can be no room in our language or in our hearts for such meanness.

How then should we prepare ourselves to be witnesses for the gospel when we encounter others who may disagree with us? Let us look at how Paul and Barnabas helped the earliest Christian disciples. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples. They discerned good leaders to help them, and they all prayed and fasted. Did this guarantee harmony and agreement? Not really. But it did prove to all that they were followers of Jesus.

When we encounter discord among our fellow Christians, let us remember that our primary objective is to love as Jesus loved us. That requires an ongoing, gradual relationship that recognizes the dignity of each person and sees them as our sister or brother in Christ.



On Saturday, June 1st, at 4:00 p.m., we will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our parish. I am deeply grateful to the 40th Anniversary Committee that has helped us prepare for this wonderful moment in our history by the events they have planned over the past 40 weeks as well as all they have done to prepare for the Anniversary Weekend. The Eucharist that afternoon will focus on all that God in His goodness has done with, through, and for us over the past 40 years. It is a time of remembering, celebrating, giving thanks, and looking forward to all that God will continue to do through us in the years ahead.

Fr. George Griener, SJ, is the homilist for that liturgy as well as the two liturgies on Sunday morning, June 2nd. Each liturgy that weekend will be a celebration of our anniversary. The color for the weekend is **RED** in honor of St. Ignatius of Antioch who was a martyr and for whom our parish is named. You are invited to wear **RED** for each liturgy on both June 1st and 2nd. We will also welcome the priests who have served in the parish over the years. Following the liturgy on Saturday afternoon, there will be a festive dinner prepared by Zandonella Catering that will include dancing afterward. Tickets have been available for the past two weeks and will once again be available following each liturgy this weekend. Tickets are limited so if you wish to attend, please get your ticket as soon as possible. No tickets will be sold at the door.



One Of Our New Sacred Vessels Is Missing

On Palm Sunday, we began to use the new sacred vessels that I obtained in honor of our 40th Anniversary. They include 6 silver chalices and 6 matching silver host vessels from St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Sometime after Easter Sunday, one of the vessels for the hosts disappeared, leaving us with only 5. No one saw anyone take it. I am at a loss as to why

anyone would remove one of our sacred vessels, whether from the Credence Table in the sanctuary or from the Sacristy. And while it saddens me greatly to use this word, I am forced to name it for what it is: a theft. I am hoping that whom ever took it, will return it immediately. There will be no questions asked. Please do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Unfortunately this is not the first time that something from the church has been stolen – we’ve also had some of our sacred linens taken as well, especially those with beautiful hand embroidery, the linens that were used for the Gift Table. It is difficult to imagine that anyone would steal from a church.

In addition, last Sunday we learned that the beautiful pastoral staff that **Pablo Villegas** created for Father “Moses” has also been stolen. Like the missing silver host vessel, the pastoral staff was taken sometime around Easter. It was kept in the sacristy and had to be taken from there. Again, I am deeply saddened that anyone would come into our church and take what does not belong to them. The pastoral staff was very meaningful to “Moses” and it represented a “labor of love” from Pablo. I am hoping that the person who took it, upon reading this, will realize what they have done and return the staff, with no questions asked, just as I am hoping the person who stole the silver host vessel will do. Please join me in praying that the thief, or thieves, will have an awakening and return these items to us. What makes this even more painful is that this was done from “within” – someone among us had access to the sacristy to remove both the vessel and staff without anyone knowing.



Every week, there are countless volunteers that help us with the various tasks that need to be done in and around the church. On behalf of all of us, thank you to: those who clean the church and parish hall each week in preparation for the weekend: **Reno & Thelma Benasfre, Jean Rogers, Angela Bueno, Mercy Osborne, Alfred Madoshi, Jun Bajet, and Emilia Freking.**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Nancy Santos, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Fr. Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl’Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Frances Rojek, Mel Costanza, Maryann Peddicord, Estrella Rusk, Rowena Cayaban, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa, Bev Iacona and Paul Riofski.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and bara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta and Sherry Webb.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson and Steve Rojek.**



The Mary Project Thank You!

Donations from The Mary Project were delivered on Monday, May 13th. Thanks to Bill Stuhldreier and Dave Simpson for loading all of the precious items in the morning. Later in the day Bill and June Stuhldreier along with Mike, Mary and Joe Clarke delivered all the baby gifts to Birthright. It was one of the best donation years yet!

Items included beautiful handmade blankets, several baskets loaded with baby essentials and plenty of diapers, wipes and other baby necessities.

Thank you once again to the best parish and people for all of your support! The babies and Moms will be thrilled! Eleven years and counting!

Thank you!! Kathleen Clarke

Clericalism and the liturgy

Whatever became of the 'new Pentecost'?

May 14, 2019

by [Paul Philibert](#)



For the three years preceding the Second Vatican Council, and all during that council, Roman Catholics added to the prayers after Mass (does anyone remember those?) Pope John XXIII's "Prayer to the Holy Spirit" for the council's success. Day after day the church prayed, "O Holy Spirit, renew Thy wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost." Pope John dreamed that through the council the Holy Spirit's gifts would flow abundantly upon the whole church for the benefit of the entire world, because the Spirit alone has the capacity to change hearts from within, not by external force but by interior persuasion.

Today, however, the church is divided over just how much of a Pentecost Vatican II actually turned out to be. It is likewise divided over what kind of church we are. This article will explore some of the consequences of this ambiguity.

The church's focus

Now, 45 years after Vatican II (1962-1965), this Easter season has reached its climax. We transition from celebrating the new life of Christ's resurrection to celebrating the new life poured out upon the world by the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is the church's movement from mystagogy to vocation, from contemplation to mission. The first Pentecost ushered in the age of the church in which the Holy Spirit turned Christ's disciples into missionaries. The Spirit is the church's living memory, anointing believers in faith to allow them to live the events of their salvation in the present. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: "The paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. The celebrations ... are repeated, and in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present [to us]" (#1104). Consequently, every one of the faithful becomes a dynamic source for the Spirit's contact with and action upon the world.

This is an essentially apostolic vision of the church. We find its origin in the Acts of the Apostles, where the gift of the Spirit immediately led people to bear witness: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4); "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Reflecting on the unmistakable energy of the Spirit revealed in these passages, Pope Paul VI asked, "In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the good news, which is able to have a powerful effect on [our] conscience?" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 4). The answer, in part, is that our church's leadership has shifted its focus from mission to

maintenance, from evangelization to ritual sanctification. The active players are no longer (or not often) imagined to be the baptized, but the ordained.

The return of clericalism

A type of clericalism has been revived over the last 20 or 25 years that is subduing the apostolic vision of the church sketched by Vatican II. It is overemphasizing the part played by the ordained in the life of the church. There are many symptoms, from cardinals unpacking their 15-foot trains of scarlet silk — their cappa magnas (ceremonial capes) — **to seminarians and young priests living full-time in cassocks; from the disappearance of inclusive language in church texts and preaching to the nearly exclusive focus upon clerical vocations in diocesan letters.** Seminarians are in short supply, and officials fear that the generalized secularization of the culture and particularly the promotion of laypersons to ministries of service in the church will have the effect of discouraging vocations to the ordained priesthood. The consequent demotion of the spiritual dignity of the faithful and a chilling of social relations between clergy and people are all too clear among some church leaders. These details are debatable; they vary from place to place. Far more significant is the underlying vision and practice of what goes on in the local church.

I am trying to describe here an implicit popular theology of the church that appears to be widespread. These ideas represent not only people's general understanding of what the church is about, but also much in pulpit preaching and in church documents as well. Here is a brief description of the problem:

(a) In this popular theology, the priest represents Christ, while the people represent those to whom Christ ministered. During this "Year for Priests," we have heard lots about how important the figure of the priest is. However, I have yet to hear anyone echo the clear teaching of St. Paul that each of the baptized is an alter Christus — another Christ — and has a vocation to share the church's mission through an apostolic life in the ordinary world.

(b) In this popular theology, the ordained presbyter (priest) is understood to be the one who is active in the Eucharist as the agent of reenacting Holy Thursday and Good Friday, while the people are sacramentally passive as recipients of the priest's sacred action. Some of those who buy into this vision of the Eucharist are hungry to hear Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony and Latin texts while they are edified by the priest's awesome rites. This reduction of the laity to passive bystanders instead of active participants in Catholic worship is the most characteristic manifestation of clericalism.

(c) One additional aspect of this implicit popular theology has to do with the Holy Spirit. It imagines that if the Spirit is bestowed on the faithful, it will come exclusively through the ministry of the ordained. It presupposes that the faithful are directly dependent upon bishops and priests for their sanctification. This ignores the rich teaching of Romans and 1 Corinthians that baptism gives the faithful the power to live and act under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and to be powerful witnesses to God's action in the world.

Vocation of the faithful

Speaking through the council fathers, the Spirit at Vatican II left no doubt that all

three of these theological manifestations of clericalism are wrong. In the "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests," we read: "Jesus gave his whole mystical body a share in the anointing of the Spirit with which he was anointed. In that body all the faithful are made a holy and kingly priesthood, they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ ... therefore there is no such thing as a member who does not have a share in the mission of the whole body" (Presbyterorum Ordinis 2). Put another way, each of the faithful, positioned in some way at the church's periphery, has the potential to initiate a more dynamic expression of the living church, calibrated precisely to the real existing possibilities for life that are always emerging there.

To the idea that the priest celebrates the Eucharist and that the faithful are nourished from afar, the council insisted on the contrary: "The eucharistic celebration is the center of the assembly of the faithful over which the priest presides. Hence priests [must] teach the faithful to offer the divine victim to God the Father in the sacrifice of the Mass and with the victim to make an offering of their own lives" (Presbyterorum Ordinis 5). By offering themselves and their apostolic action in the world, the faithful bring the fruit of their baptismal priesthood (which is essentially nonliturgical and lived out in the world) to the church's fundamental act of sacrifice and self-offering to God at Mass. When this role of the faithful is denied, then Sunday Mass becomes the place where people assemble not as a priestly people offering their lives to God, but as individuals praying private devotions as they watch the priest offer sacred rites on a distant altar.

To the idea that the faithful are sanctified uniquely through the ministries of the ordained, the "Constitution on the Church" clearly says: "The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all their Christian activities they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the marvels of him who has called them out of darkness into his wonderful light" (Lumen Gentium 10). In other words, the vocation that the church offers to the faithful is not a secondary role as clients of clerical ministries, but a Spirit-filled participation as pioneers in the church's role as herald of the kingdom of God.

Thoughts for reflection

The three examples of clericalism just given are never articulated in exactly these terms. However, before offering this essay for publication, I checked out these ideas with a number of people to see if they ring true to their experience. All of them assured me that this is what they see in the new clericalism, expressed not in so many words, but in actions and attitudes. The fundamental problem with clerical condescension is that it appeals to and reinforces a passive clericalism on the part of the laity who are used to being put down and quite unused to being reminded of or commissioned for an apostolic role. The laity is supposed to be the link between the church and the world. Pope Paul VI describes laypeople as those whose vocation places them in the midst of the world, in charge of the most varied temporal tasks. He goes on to say: "Their primary and immediate task is ... to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world

of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 70). A church that forgets this and fails to commission the laity to this irreplaceable dynamic role in the culture has let go of the great commission that Christ left to the church as his last mandate: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:19). It is a church that has forgotten that it is baptizing and confirming missionaries "to make the church present and fruitful in those places in circumstances where it is only through them that it can become the salt of the earth" (Lumen Gentium 33).

Finally, we should also note that there has never been a moment in which the irreplaceable role of the ordained minister has been more important. We need a ministerial priesthood at the service of the common priesthood of the baptized (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1547), we need presbyters who can teach the faithful to offer their own lives along with the divine victim in the sacrifice of the Mass (Presbyterorum Ordinis 5), we need ministers of the Gospel who recognize that "the distinct character of [their] activities is the aim to proclaim the Gospel of God" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 68) in ways to draw people effectively to the heart of Christ. But this ordained ministry cannot be the condescension of a patriarchal master, but only the loving service of an apostolic brother. The very nature of the church demands it. The parish is not about giving passive Christians spiritual comfort; it is rather the recruiting center for an apostolic priestly people. The Spirit is waiting. The people are waiting. What are you waiting for?

Special Report by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate

The fourth Contra Costa Clergy Cohort was held on May 15. The topic was IMPLICIT BIAS, a popular term in

today's studies on racism. Each person is different and sees the world through their upbringing and experiences. The question is: Can I step into another's suffering without arrogance or any attempt to control the situation? Am I willing to be changed by another's experience?

Racism gets looked at as a people of color problem when it is not. We are all formed around core needs (food shelter and security). We all have bias, a blind spot. We do not know what we do not know. This is not so much a character flaw as the way we are socialized from childhood. The definition of implicit bias from the Stanford study is "Unconscious assumptions that are socialized and ingrained; thoughts or feelings about people that can influence our actions which we are unaware of." We take in stimuli and arrange it with certain characteristics. One can have love of God and deep compassion for other human beings and still unknowingly see groups in certain biased ways. The information we receive on a daily basis affects how we view things, how social policy is made and how our institutions function. We tend to categorize and stereotype different groups in four categories: the pitied out-group (sick and suffering, children ravaged by war, etc), the esteemed in-group (our own), the envied out-group (the rich and famous), and the despised out-group (homeless, felons, welfare queens, etc.).

Prejudice comes from our own experience. Racism is prejudice plus power. One group has the power to carry out systematic racism. An example is the prison system which incarcerates far more blacks than whites compared to the general population.

How do we as people of faith challenge this? How do I widen my circle and challenge the implicit bias in our institutions and our society? It is not so much what we need to do as who we need to become. We need to be in close proximity to people in pain.

There are four kinds of racism: individual, institutional, cultural and structural. Implicit bias is complicit with and creates unconscious racism. We need to step forward from our comfort zone and become a bridge across difference. We need to make time for bridging. No one is coming to change this situation. We, ourselves, have to initiate the change to build a beloved community. We need to say to others, "I cannot see my blindness. I cannot hear your criticism. Can you help me?" Our stories influence how we approach situations. Whatever stimuli we don't have about a situation, our implicit bias fills in.

In order to make a difference we need to go through a four step process. The first is encounter. We need to meet and listen to those in pain. The second is disruption. Our way of seeing things gets challenged. The third is reimagining a world that is different, where we all can truly be brothers and sisters in a "beloved community". The fourth is prophetic action. We take steps to witness to this new world. We need to be intentional about the encounters, able to face disruption, creative in reimagining and clear on our prophetic actions. We can start this process by creating "bridging circles", safe places where people of different experiences can share and listen to one another. One way learn about one's own implicit bias is by taking the Harvard Implicit Bias Test available on Google.