

CELEBRATE EASTER

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Dear Lord, grant us the gift of forbearance that we may be gentle, kind and understanding when those around us are tired and weary of everyday concerns.

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

Peter began to see things and people differently because he had an experience of Jesus and a radical conversion resulting from that experience. Peter was a real Jew, true to his traditions and like all good Jews, he saw the gentiles as unclean and unworthy of respect. This passage from Acts tells us how Peter was able to accept the invitation of Cornelius, go to his house, accept his hospitality and accept Cornelius and others as children of God.

The Spirit of Jesus transformed Peter and gave him a new way of seeing and relating.

Radical conversion is possible for all, in the Spirit of Jesus. An encounter with Jesus makes it possible for us to see God, ourselves, others and the world in a new light, in the light of Jesus and bring us into loving relationship with all God' people.

Psalm 98

The Psalmist invites his people to sing a "NEW" song, because God has done "Marvelous" things. God had grasped the right hand of King Cyrus, mighty monarch of Persia....the most powerful monarch of the then known world and used his power to allow a handful of miserable Israelites (poor remnant Israel) to get out their situation of forced labor in Babylon and be free to return home to Jerusalem (c. 539 B.C.). The temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C. and rededicated a few months later. This was a whole new situation, and this psalm was for this new situation of a renewed people in a new temple building. What else to do but sing a "NEW SONG"!

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
For he has done wondrous deeds;
His right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.....
Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands,
Break into song, sing praise.....**

1 John 4:7-10

"Love is of God who is love...love consists in this that God has loved us." John tells us that it is in this love of God that we can respond to the command to "love one another".

The source of our love is God...the place where we learn to love is God and God's love.

The opposite also is true, says this passage from the letter of John.....one who does not love knows nothing of God.....he/she is not in God and so has not learned to love....

Send your roots deep into the mystery God's life and love! Abide in His Love!

John 15:9-17

This Gospel passage describes the boundless and limitless love of Jesus to which the disciples are called. This boundless, limitless, unconquerable, invincible love is, "no greater love than this.....love one another as I have loved you...." The reason for this love is, "you are my friends." He lays down his life because he loves his followers.

Friends of Jesus must become friends of one another. Jesus gathers a community of followers not based on certain set of rules, but founded on friendship, on self-sacrificing love, on total giving..... "love one another as I have loved you" the standard is not as others love you, or as you love yourself, but "as I love you" as Jesus loves us, as God loves us! And Jesus made it very clear, it was "his choice" he chose to lay down his life for his friends.....

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.... that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete." The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with the Father. Again, and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to "abide" in the Father's Love. His disciples must do the same.

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." It is a challenge to reach out to others in love - "not to withhold" our love from others. We are called to give what we have received as gifts from the Lord. Jesus calls us his friends, not slaves....it was his choice, not ours. Now it is up to us to make our own choices in response.

It is never sufficient to abstain from wrong-doing or sin or evil. We are called to be good and to do good - a good word and a good deed proclaim who we are. We have many opportunities to share God's gift of Love and life. We meet people who are hurting and bleeding and needing a "transfusion" of love.

The standard of love is NOT an eye for an eye or love others as they love us or love others as we love ourselves...it is "Love one another as I have loved you". The standard is to love as God loves us, as Jesus loves us....it is joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, enduring, steadfast love!

Saint of the Day, May 5 – St. Hilary of Arles and 17 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Hilary of Arles was born around the year 401, probably northern Gaul. In his early youth, around 420, Hilary entered the Abbey of Lérins that was presided over by his kinsman Honoratus, who later became bishop of Arles. In 429 Hilary succeeded Honoratus as bishop and continued to follow in his footsteps. Hilary was only 29 when he was chosen to be bishop of Arles.

The new, youthful bishop undertook the role with confidence. He did manual labor to earn money for the poor. He sold sacred vessels to ransom captives. He became a magnificent orator. He traveled everywhere on foot, always wearing simple clothing.

That was the bright side. Hilary encountered difficulty in his relationships with other bishops over whom he had some jurisdiction. He unilaterally deposed one bishop. He selected another bishop to replace one who was very ill—but, to complicate matters, did not die! Pope Saint Leo the Great kept Hilary a bishop but stripped him of some of his powers. Hilary died on May 5, 449 in Arles.

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