



Sixth Sunday of Easter[c]

May 5, 2013

Readings

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Calendar

May 9 or 12: Feast of the Ascension

May 12: Mother's Day in the United States, Canada and elsewhere

Quotes

"Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice."

Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, 1991

"The Church's conviction of the inseparability of justice and charity is ultimately born of her experience of the revelation of God's infinite justice and mercy in Jesus Christ, and it finds expression in her insistence that man himself and his irreducible dignity must be at the centre of political and social life."

Pope Benedict XVI, April 28, 2007

"Love of neighbor is an absolute demand for justice, because charity must manifest itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protect human rights, and facilitate human development. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love."

Justice in the World, Synod of Bishops, 1971

"A charity that loves and serves the person is never able to be separated from justice. Each in its own way demands the full, effective acknowledgment of the rights of the individual, to which society is ordered in all its structures and institutions."

Pope John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, 42

"Finally, may Christ inflame the desires of all people to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong. Through His power and inspiration may all peoples welcome each other to their hearts as brothers and sisters, and may the peace they long for ever flower and ever reign among them."

Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris 171

Thoughts for your consideration

Religion can cause much harm and confusion or it can become a source of life and hope to all people. Looking at history, we might say that there exists good religion and bad religion. We like to think that the religion which we practice is good religion - religion which leads people to life and peace and justice.

In the first reading, the men and women in Antioch have heard religious messages or opinions that have upset them and disturbed their peace of mind. There is tension and conflict. The issue is brought to the community in Jerusalem. The community consensus is not to impose anything that gets in the way of the spirit – that gets in the way of the freedom and joy of the people of God in Antioch or anywhere else – that gets in the way of liberation.

In the heavenly Jerusalem envisioned in the second reading, things are so simple and direct. There is no need for a temple. The presence and glory of God is everywhere. As Jesus makes clear in the gospel, the spirit comes and the gift is peace.

The invitation of the scriptures is to get involved in good, healthy religion. The invitation is to keep it simple and focused on what is really important – what will give life and freedom and peace. The social teaching of the church aims to help us keep focused on what is really important and what is important to people.

Religion should not be about ideology or empty spiritual practices or rigid rituals disconnected from life. Rather, it is about a concern for what it is really important, a concern for the spiritual values that really matter. These include the issues of justice and peace in the world, a concern for the poor, a respect for creation as a gift from God, a concern for reconciliation with those with whom we are in conflict, and a focus on a world that (using the images of the second reading) reflects the “glory of God.”

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The theme of peace flows through our scriptures today. Jesus talks about giving us peace, a peace that might be different than that of the world. The early disciples go to Jerusalem to discern a common vision and to promote peace within the church. The Jerusalem envisioned in Revelation seems to be a magnificent city of tranquility and peace. Reflections on peace must certainly be part of our prayer today:

- How do we get nations to spend more on people and less on weapons?
- How do we end the wars in Afghanistan, Syria and elsewhere and help people find peace?
- How do we encourage respectful and helpful political discourse?
- How do we deal with domestic violence in our nation?
- How do we deal with our own violent emotions?
- How do we stay “at peace” in a world with so many problems?

Questions for reflection in your faith-sharing group

What things disturb your sense of peace?

What issues or conflicts disturb your spirit, rob you of energy, and prevent you from being free and alive in Christ?

Story

From: <http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/zen.html>

When the spiritual teacher and his disciples began their evening meditation, a cat that lived in the monastery made such noise that it distracted them. One day the teacher ordered that the cat be tied up during the evening practice.

Years later, when the teacher died, the cat continued to be tied up during the meditation session. And when the cat eventually died, another cat was brought to the monastery and tied up. Centuries later, learned descendants of the spiritual teacher wrote scholarly treatises about the religious significance of tying up a cat for meditation practice.

Actions - Links

Advocate for immigration reform and other important issues at:

<http://capwiz.com/ipjc/home/>

Ask the president about taking action on climate change issues at:

https://secure.nrdonline.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=3041&s_src=twsharecad#_UXihapUYrug.twitter

Speak up about tax haven abuse at:

http://org.salsalabs.com/o/863/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=13181

Crazy Facts

“At a time when the majority of Americans use online banking, and some even deposit checks using their cellphone cameras, roughly eight percent of America's 115 million households don't have a checking or savings account, according to census data compiled by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The numbers are far higher among minorities: More than 20 percent of African-Americans and Hispanics are essentially left out of the American banking system.”

<http://inplainsight.nbcnews.com/news/2013/04/22/17840373-poverty-in-america-millions-of-families-too-broke-for-bank-accounts?lite>

“The nation's richest American households generally gained wealth during the first two years of the economic recovery, a new research report finds, while most American households saw their net worth drop. The report, released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center, found that the mean net worth for the 7 percent of American households at the top of the wealth distribution rose by 28 percent between 2009 and 2011, the most recent data available. Meanwhile, the mean net worth for the other 93 percent of American households fell by 4 percent during that period, according to Pew's analysis of Census data.”

<http://lifeinc.today.com/news/2013/04/23/17880268-rich-got-richer-during-the-recovery-and-rest-got-poorer-study-says?lite>

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord, help us to be one.

For an end to the war and terror in our world, we pray....
For an end to the war and fighting in Afghanistan, we pray....
For an end to the various wars in Africa, we pray....
For an end to all the dozens of wars that divide our world, we pray....
For an end to all the kinds of violence that show up all over our world, we pray....
For an end to all the preparations for war, we pray....
For an end to the world's spending for war and weapons, we pray....
For the grace to listen to one another, we pray...
For the grace to always be people of mercy, we pray....
For the grace of reconciliation and understanding, we pray....
For Spirit to come and lead us on the road to peace, we pray....

Prayer

Fall in Love

Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is,
than falling in love in a quite absolute final way.

What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.

It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekend,
what you read, who you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love,
stay in love,
and it will decide everything.

- Attributed to Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Image:



<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com/2012/11/proper-27-ordinary-32-b-november-11.html>