

Homily for V (5) Sunday of Easter Year C 15-05-2022 by Fr. Lubem Waya, osj

First Reading: Acts: 14:21-27

Psalm: Psalm 145

Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-5

Gospel: John 13:31-35

WILL GOD MAKE ALL THINGS NEW IN MY LIFE?

The earnest sacrifices of the apostles, as we find in our first reading prove what the grace of God can accomplish in us and through us when we accept to co-operate with God. On our own we can do nothing, but with Him nothing is impossible. It is very typical to get overwhelmed by our sense of unworthiness when called by God like the prophets of old. Would I be good enough as a spouse and parent, or in government, in business, or in the ordained ministry, to bring out the positive change I envisage? The answer is, "Of course not." At least, not on my own. Because none of us is ever good enough on their own for the various ways that God calls us to serve Him. Moms and Dads would wonder if they are good enough to lead their children to God, to create a holy home. A true pastor of souls would wonder if they are good enough to lead the flock entrusted to them back to God. But God, who can make all things new, also makes us good enough to do His work, or, in the very least, cleans up the mess we make so we can try again. He makes us better than we are as He makes all things new again for us. He did this for the apostles even when they were rejected by their own people by opening the hearts of the Gentiles to welcome them. Strange but beautiful, they knew it was not by their power but by the grace of God. For this, they returned back to the Church in gratitude to give an account of all that God had done with them and the pagans. God was glorified in their lives and work, and God, in turn, glorified them by adding Gentiles to their number. Does your life give glory to God?

To glorify God, Jesus in the gospel gives us a new commandment to love one another as He has loved us. By this love, He brought glory to the Father. This love is also the only proof that we are Christ's true disciples. There is no greater glory and honour one can offer than the willing sacrifice of one's life for the sake of another. This is the true nature of love – the total self-giving and free offering of one's life for the good of another. A mother does this when she does everything in her power to give birth to the child, love, nurture, protect, and save the life of the child. A soldier in patriotic love for his country will endure any hardship and suffering and willingly sacrifice his own life to defend his people. A good pastor would put his life at the service of his flock. God the Father showed the depth of His love and mercy by willingly offering His only begotten Son, as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. To ransom a slave, He gave His only Son. That slave is you and me bound in sin and death. This is why Jesus gives us this new commandment and way of love to be our token of gratitude and to replace the old commandment to love one's neighbour as one's self. And it is this new teaching that holds the promise of God's constant and enduring presence in His Church for eternity.

The new commandment is also a new way of living, experienced in the way we Christians treat each other and reach out to those in the world around us. How do you treat one another? "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Love becomes the only testament to the truth of the Christian message. But is it possible to love like God? St. Paul tells us that, 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Romans 5:5)'. All of us today who believe and are baptized in Him have received this spirit. If we also yield our hearts and submit to His will for us, then the Holy Spirit will purify all that is unloving, unkind, and unforgiving in us. This can transform us to better understand the power of His word of truth and life which makes all things new by setting us free from ignorance, unbelief, deception, and sin. At this point, we can love truly including our enemies, not on our own but by the power that overcomes the world – the triumphant cross of Christ with which God makes all things new again. Through His cross, we shall have a new life in a new heaven and a new earth. May the Lord make us new in mind and heart. Amen.