

The world is not aware that we are one and related: Let us obey the commandment to love. (6th Sunday of Easter of year B, Acts 10:25-26, 34-35,44-48; 1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17)

One of the questions and answers that has kept me meditating and reflecting about the world/us was the question the president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, asked the Rwandan assembled church leaders when he represented the Pope in 1994: "Are you saying that the blood of tribalism is deeper than the waters of baptism?" One leader answered, "Yes, it is!"

This has proven the extent discrimination has taken a toll in the fabrics of human existence in this world. It has resulted to such existential issues like rich-poor, developed-developing, majority-minority, North-South, West-East dichotomy. What do we get from all this? Wars, rivalries, conflicts, tribalism, racism, nepotism, inequality, etc.

Little wonder, we consider it something so special when the developed countries extend hands of fellowship to the developing ones, consider it fortunate when the rich relates with the poor, consider it a blessing when the North helps the South, and consider it a great charity when the West opens its arms to embrace the East

However, the readings of this Sunday are an interruption and a contrast to all those highlighted dynamics. Peter, in the first reading pointed out how God treats every person equal, and that was why he didn't try to accept the homage Cornelius wanted to offer him when he visited his house. (Acts 10:34, 25,26). He by this, teaches that we are all humans, created equal by God. Our equality and oneness as children of God stems from the sacrament of baptism through which we receive the power of the Holy Spirit. To this end, he crowned his visit in the house of Cornelius with the baptism of the entire household, who are not Jews.

Against this backdrop, the Psalmist sings, "The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power." He didn't reveal to only the West or East, North or South, developed or developing countries, rich or poor, or even only to Jews, but to all at the same time. God doesn't show partiality. He is the God of all races and tribes.

John in the second reading underscores this. He asks that we should love one another, as a way of acknowledging and appreciating God who revealed Himself to us in Christ Jesus. It is in doing this, that we can realize that we are one and related, and possibly demolish the structure of discrimination in our world today.

Jesus in the Gospel tells us to take him as a model. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13). Taken from this, he commands us to love one another. This is unlike advice. He says: "You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:14). Christ knows that this is only way that the oneness of humanity can be realized. It is the only way to destroy the structure of discrimination. It is the only way we can appreciate diversity, build bridges of friendship with one another.

If Jesus has called us friends, despite our background, it means that we should take one another as a friend. It is the only way that we can realize that the waters of baptism are stronger, thicker and deeper than the blood of tribalism.

May God's grace be sufficient for us to always be aware that we are one and related. May God's love always reign in our world.

Happy Sunday and blessed week ahead. 🙏 You're precious. 💖 Fada Colman cares about you and yours.