

When we love unconditionally, we touch and share the Sacred.

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23 , Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13, 1 Cor 15:45-49, Lk 6:27-38



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Good morning/evening. I want to share a couple of stories that will help unpack our readings. The first is one of my earliest memories as a child. It was an early winter evening and already dark. My father had come home from work and laid his coat over the arm of the sofa. By whatever possesses a two-year-old I decided it was time for hide and seek. I crawled onto the sofa and under my father's coat. It's funny how we remember details. I remember that his coat was still warm from his having worn it and how the tobacco smoke from his pipe lingered. It wasn't long before I was missed. I delighted to hear the opening and closing of doors as rooms and closets were checked. First upstairs then downstairs. With a note of panic my mother asked if I could have possibly gone outside. My father looked and did not see any footprints in the snow. It was my laughter that finally gave me away. My father heard me and threw back his coat, saying with a smile, "There you are." I remember that he picked me up and carried me to my mother in the kitchen. We shared a group hug with me grinning ear to ear. Whenever my mother retold this story, it always ended with, "You children have given me every one of my gray hairs."

In that embrace that I shared with my parents, I knew their love. *A child's experience of parental love is an introduction and foretaste of our Creator's unconditional love.* The heart and hands of my parents were given in marriage for the care of each other and family. To know their care was an experience of a far greater love. *When we love unconditionally, we touch and share the Sacred.*

Our Gospel reading today contains a series of admonitions; 'Love your enemies, Do good to those who hate you, Bless those that curse you, Pray for those that mistreat you.' Jesus is teaching us how to love so that we can touch and share that which is Sacred.

I recently had a package delivered to the house. The driver walked up and handed me the package and I thanked him, asking, “How are you doing?” thinking of COVID, I went on, “Family well?” He smiled and said everyone is doing fine. He walked a few steps towards his truck, stopped and turned to me saying, “That’s what it is all about isn’t it; family.” He turned and with a wave said, “Thank you for asking.” We have drawn so many lines in the sand that we forget that others, perhaps different from us, are just trying to provide and care for their families. We are called to recognize each other as brothers and sisters, equal in the law and in the eyes of God. Jesus teaches a new understanding of our humanity.

When I was a child, I remember the winter nights. Back then, before cable, satellite or internet TV, each house had a television antenna mounted on the roof. The guy-wires ran from the antenna mast to the corners of the roof. As the temperature would drop, the guy-wires would tighten in the cold. This was like tuning the strings of a guitar with the roof and attic as the sound board. As the wind strummed the guy-wires it would reverberate through the house in a desolate sort of way. That sound reminded us of the frigid cold outside and we would burrow a bit deeper beneath the covers. It also reminded us, that, this night, we were safe and warm, within the comfort of home, and family. Family gives us our sense of belonging, value, and dignity. My prayer of late is certainly with those who have neither roof or proper shelter. It also includes those rejected and denied the dignity of their place in the human family. That rejection is a bitter cold like none other.

The admonitions that Jesus offers his disciples are not easy. Today some might scoff and walk away. Jesus is teaching us to love with abandon.

In our second reading St Paul draws a comparison between the first and second Adam. The second Adam is described as a life-giving spirit; that is, one who loves without reservation and condition. In our spiritual journey we are called to love more deeply today than yesterday. It is a lifelong process of practice and refinement. For St. Tom's folks it involves delivering bathroom tissue, work at the Gospel Mission and a hundred other ministries. We are family caring for the greater family that is our community.

There is great joy in that service. Jesus says as much at the end of today's Gospel. "Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down and overflowing, will be poured into your lap." Somehow, wonderfully, when we love unconditionally, we touch and share the Sacred. That is the fruit.

In our spiritual journey, like the wind through the guy-wires, we listen for the Holy Spirit that guides us as church. The Synod on Synodality is an opportunity to use those listening skills. The *Spirit That Will Not Abandon Us*, touches our lives in more ways than we can imagine. It is good to gather and share stories of faith with one another. In doing so we find direction and our dignity as brothers and sisters.

May the Eucharist that we share open our hearts in such a way that finds us asking, "How are you doing? How is your family?"

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.
I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org. (n.d.).