



May 25, 2025

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

"Holy Father I pray...they may be one, as we are one..." John 17:22



Dear Friends;

Christ is risen!

I follow Jesuit Fr. James Martin on Facebook. In a recent post he brought up the question of how people want to know where our new Pope Leo XIV stands on any number of our concerns from women deacons, the traditional Latin Mass, LGBTQ+ people, immigration and is he “woke” etc. Fr Martin points out that Leo has only been Pope for a week. We need to be patient. Things that he said as a cardinal may change now that he is pope. It is good for us in our extremely polarized world to take time to wait and to listen.

In his inauguration homily Pope Leo stated, *“I come to you as a brother who desires to be a servant of your faith and your joy, walking with you on the path of God’s love, who wills that we all be united as one family.”* These words resonate with the synodal path that Pope Francis opened for us as Church. That we are invited to walk together, listen to one another, and discern the way as we journey toward God.

What both Leo and Francis have expressed is what today’s readings exhort us. In our reading from John (taken from the 7th Sunday of Easter) Jesus is praying for his disciples at the Last Supper. His last intention for his followers is that they reflect the bond of love, we name Holy Spirit, that binds the Father and Son together.

We are called to unity not uniformity. All are not created to be the same as bricks from a factory. God has cultivated a garden of diversity that is brought into harmony by the Spirit. We should not be afraid of diversity but celebrate it. We each have our unique gifts and roles to play in in this journey to the kingdom of God’s justice and peace. Like Jesus we welcome all, especially those at the peripheries as God shapes us into a new world.

In the first reading today from the Acts of the Apostles (6th Sunday of Easter) tensions arose in the primitive Church. This is one of the first crises that the Church faces. In the Jewish synagogues, scattered throughout the Mediterranean of the first century, were a number of Gentiles (non-Jews) who were attracted to the community life and ethics of these Jewish communities.

These Gentiles were called God-fearers by the Jewish congregations. These Gentiles participated to the degree they could without full conversion. But many could not bring themselves to be circumcised (males) and all the dietary and ritual purity restrictions. It was to these that Paul had an affective mission. Paul developed the idea that faith in Jesus for Gentiles was the same as being circumcised. He did not feel that all the requirements of Jewish law should be placed upon them. There were those who vehemently disagreed with Paul.

These Jewish Christians told the Gentile converts that they needed to convert fully to Judaism. This created much turmoil. Our passage from Acts shows the early church practicing the synodal way. The various parties gather in meeting to pray, listen to one another, and discern the best direction. They resolved the issue with a compromise. In his Inaugural homily Leo said, *“The church is made up of all who live in harmony with their brothers and sisters and love their neighbors. This...should be our great desire: a united church, a sign of unity and communion, becoming leaven for a reconciled world.”* This is for what Jesus prays during his last night on earth.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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