



07 April 2024 + Second Sunday of Easter

I received several positive comments about the theme of this year's Holy Week Retreat. I think all of us feel weighed down by the tremendous amount of hatred and violence in our world today, whether that be in politics, education, healthcare, economics, general social discourse, and sadly, among religious groups. I told you several times that I sensed a similar kind of universal hatred when I was growing up during the racial riots and the war protests in the 1960's and 1970's. But there was one thing strikingly different. During those years there were many leaders who put out the call to end violence through a greater love for each other. Even the folk songs reflected the need for an end to hatred and violence through an embrace of love. In this context, the Gospel of Jesus Christ made sense. I think that is why so many Christian churches participated in the call for change. In fact, as I write my journal entry today, it is the 56th anniversary of Martin Luther King's very last speech known as the "I have been to the mountaintop" speech. He was assassinated the following day. I remember it well.

Today, however, protests are quite different. Opposing sides demonize each other and call for even greater hatred and violence. My hope, when I was young, were the voices of those who called for love, for respectfully seeking a common humanity. Today, we are so individualistic that seeking a common humanity seems impossible. That is why I truly fear for our young people, and as times goes on, wonder if they will ever be able to find enduring faith, hope, and love? When you hear of people who welcome annihilation of other human beings, you know you are in the darkest moments of time. It seems that unless we are plunged deep into that darkness, we do not look for a better way.

Our Lord plunged into that darkness. His resurrection was the light that began to set a new path. The mission of his disciples was to restore love to the world, the very heart of his Gospel. During this post-Easter time I am reminded of St. Peter who met our Lord on the shores of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus had only one question of Peter, that he asked three times, "Do you love me?" If you do, Jesus told him, then feed my lambs and feed my sheep. As a Catholic community that must be our mission as well. Easter Sunday is not just one Sunday out of the year. The early Church gathered each and every Sunday to hear the Lord speak through his Gospel, and be united with him in his Holy Eucharist. Make Sunday truly the Lord's Day, when we and our children, can be strengthened in our vocation to love as Jesus taught us.

Blessings and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Felix".

PS! Our finance council wants me to remind you that we have not reached our goal for the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Please help us reach that goal if you haven't contributed yet.