



Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter (B)
May 9, 2021

God's Generous Love

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The painting by Aldo Carpi, *The Madonna of the Poor*, shows the Virgin Mary bringing Baby Jesus to visit the poor. She doesn't make distinctions. Mary understood that Jesus didn't come just for the rich and powerful but for everyone.

Peter learns this lesson when speaking to Cornelius and his household. Until this time, the apostles were preaching to the Jewish people, but when Peter speaks to these Romans, the Holy Spirit comes upon them just as he had upon the Jews. They repent and believe. This for Peter was essential, because it

showed that Jesus wanted to send his Spirit and teachings to everyone, not just the chosen race. God doesn't show favoritism.

The same goes for us. It's natural to want to love our own: our family and those sharing our social status, political party, club, school, or parish. But our love has to spread to all peoples, especially those in the most moral, material, and spiritual need. God is love, and those who love show they come from God.

Another element of love is that it is free, wanting nothing in return. Recently, while sitting at an outdoor café, a woman walked up and gave me a small, wrapped gift. "I like to give gifts to complete strangers, just to make their day," she said. What a beautiful gesture.

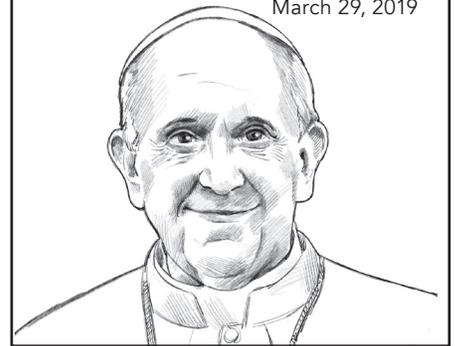
We should also not that Cornelius accepted God's love, was baptized, and began following the Way. He and his family didn't take that free love of God for granted. They responded to it in joyful obedience. God's generous love asks for an equally generous response. +

It's natural to want to love our own, but our love has to spread to all people, especially those in most need.

A Word from Pope Francis

Reconciliation itself is a benefit that the wisdom of the Church has always safeguarded with all her moral and legal might, with the sacramental seal.... It is indispensable for the sanctity of the sacrament and for the freedom of conscience of the penitent...that the sacramental conversation will remain within the secrecy of the confessional.

—Address to Apostolic Penitentiary, March 29, 2019



Sunday Readings

Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48

They could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God.

1 John 4:7–10

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

John 15:9–17

[Jesus said,] "Love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I help those who disagree with me or my beliefs?
- Do I understand that God's love requires a generous response?

How Are We Called?

By Kathleen M. Basi

Since the moment Pope Francis first appeared on the balcony at St. Peter's, he has been engaging the world. He energizes us and at the same time challenges us to actively participate in our faith. Most of us would rather practice our faith within the safety of a little box, where the Christian call is as clear-cut as praying the rosary, lighting a candle, and attending Sunday Mass. Pope Francis asks us to move beyond the walls of the Church and be a true witness to Christ in the world.

Like many faithful people, I always thought most issues had simple answers. However, after having a child with a disability, I realized that when the Christian call intersects with the real world, things become more complex—life isn't that simple.

Consider the pro-life cause, perhaps the most clear-cut issue imaginable. It's not enough to believe that children with disabilities have a right to be born. Their needs impose a heavy financial burden on their families: therapies, surgeries, orthotics, and so on. We have a moral obligation to support life at all stages, even when it requires societal intervention that runs counter to ideals about self-sufficiency.

Pope Francis has called us to confront complex questions and seek thorough answers. Using this thorough process, how can we address some of the questions we face?



- How am I *called* to respond to bitter conflicts within my extended family?
- How am I *called* to interact with the person who delights in goading me?
- How am I *called* to love the family member who is gay or lesbian?
- How am I *called* to help the homeless person at the corner?
- How am I *called* to interact with the person in a wheelchair whose speech is hard to understand?
- How am I *called* to alleviate the desperation that leads a woman to choose abortion?
- How am I *called* to honor human dignity, not only of crime victims, but of those who perpetrate the crime?

As followers of Christ, we will always find ourselves being called upon to respond to situations that may not be as clear-cut as they appear on the surface. Although the path may be demanding, we have the support of the Church and Christ as an example of how to do the hard work. Pope Francis has called us to labor together.

Faith grows only when it is stretched. A call of faith is not a static request; to follow Christ means to get up, pick up your cross, and act. True discipleship—though difficult—is worthwhile, because it draws us closer to the heart of Christ, the source of our calling. +

*Faith grows only when
it is stretched.*

**PRAYER**

*Risen Lord, you command us
to love one another.*

*Help me to show your love
to all people.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of
Easter through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 10–15

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:11–15 / Jn 15:26–16:4a

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:22–34 / Jn 16:5–11

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 17:15, 22–18:1 / Jn 16:12–15

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 18:1–8 / Jn 16:16–20

Friday, St. Matthias:
Acts 1:15–17, 20–26 / Jn 15:9–17

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 18:23–28 / Jn 16:23b–28

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