

Homily for the 6th Sunday of Easter

May 25-26, 2019

Readings: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Revelations 21:10-14, 22-23; John 14:23-29

Preacher: Virginia Fifield

“Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” How difficult that is to understand in today’s day and age.

We are living in a time of global derisiveness. People are fleeing their countries because of hunger, violence, poverty and corruption. We are destroying our planet with fossil fuels, plastics and chemicals. We are at a breaking point because of racism. Too many are not given their right to dignity and a decent home. And we think that individually we have the solutions to this crisis, which only serves to widen the divide.

We have not found a way to come to the table to listen to each other. We don’t want to have to relinquish what we perceive to be control. We don’t want to have to make sacrifices in order to make room for the refugee. We don’t want to give up our luxuries in order to save the planet. So many of us have decided that everything is black and white. There is a wrong way and there is a right way, and my way is right.

All of this is burdening our spirits. We are looking for answers. We are longing for some peace in our lives. We want to shut out the noise and the chaos that we have created and find some peace.

In this Sunday’s readings we hear Jesus tell us that, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our dwelling with them.” We have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, who reminds us of everything Christ has taught. But we have to open ourselves up and quiet ourselves long enough to hear the prompting of the Spirit. Only then will be able to hear with our hearts, “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. *Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.*”

The question is how do we understand that peace? In my Native culture, the Haudenosaunee live by “The Great Law of Peace.” We understand “peace” not to

be an absence of conflict or war. We understand it as living with “a good mind.” That is being able to live with respect for the earth and all who dwell upon it. It is being wise and humble enough to know that everyone has a little piece of the truth, and that truth can only be revealed when everyone is listened to with honor and respect. It is also learning to sit quietly with our prayer and our thoughts so that we can understand our worst enemy—ourselves. Because it is only in understanding ourselves and our relationship within creation that we can obtain any kind of inner peace.

Perhaps that is what we all need to do...sit with creation and listen. Listen to the words, “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.” And let them sink into the deepest part of ourselves. Because if everyone would live with that peace, our souls would not be burdened but would be opened to all that God has promised. God will be able to find a place to come and dwell within us.