



# SACRED HEART CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES

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## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—C *Radical Newness*

Here is a trivia question for you: What line in today's readings is found in one of Mel Gibson's movies?

A clue to the answer lies in the fact that radical newness almost leaps from the pages of all the readings today. New churches are being established by Paul and Barnabas in the first reading; we are given a new commandment by Jesus in the Gospel; and in the second reading St. John sees a new heaven and a new earth; a new Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the one seated on a throne declares, "See, I am making all things new."

In short, all we need do is love one another as Jesus has loved us and all things will be made new.

Perhaps you have figured out the answer already. The last line of the reading from the book of Revelation is put into the mouth of Jesus in the movie "Passion of the Christ." It occurs where Jesus, all bloodied, tortured and half dead, meets his mother on the way of the Cross. She gazes at him with pity and love, and he simply says, "Behold, I am making all things new."

This is one of the brilliant moments in this powerful movie. The viewer is left wondering how this condemned innocent human being, taken as a criminal, could do anything at all except make it to his own crucifixion with some help from Simon of Cyrene.

Yet it is precisely that love which refuses to resort to violence, refuses to respond with vengeance, and in the end seeks only to forgive, that is the source of the radical newness permeating all the readings.

This love of God in Jesus Christ which shines through this darkest hour is the newness that the world had never seen before. It is this newness that tore open the barrier between heaven and earth and now makes possible a New Jerusalem in which all those who believe in Him and live in Him will dwell eternally.

It is this reality that explains the energy and excitement of Paul and Barnabas as they go around the Mediterranean turning the world upside down. They are full of the Good News and spreading it.

This newness comes to realization as we live the gospel: “Love one another as Jesus loved us.” We can say there are four ways that Jesus loved us and how we can love one another.

First, Jesus understands us. Through the incarnation he became one of us and shared our reality. Trying to understand the hurtful other, to get inside the other person’s skin, is a new way of loving that other person.

Second, forgiveness is what Jesus was and what he did on the cross. Mary at the foot of the cross was the strong biblical woman, doing at the foot of the cross what Jesus was doing on the cross – forgiving those who were killing her Son. To forgive from the heart all those who hurt and abuse us is to love in a new way.

Third, achieving intimacy and showing affection is a way to love others as Jesus loved us. He enjoyed an intimate relationship with the Father, and was not afraid to show affection to his disciples, showing us another way to love.

Lastly, Jesus gave his life away in self-sacrifice, and so must we, in lives of selfless service. Mother Theresa of Calcutta is perhaps one of the most outstanding persons in recent memory who modelled this for us, despite her experience of the apparent absence of God in her prayer life.

Our task, then, is to love one another as Jesus has loved us and all things will be made new.

The Eucharist is a share in that newness of God made real in Jesus Christ. As we lis-

## **OUR INABILITY TO CAST OUT DEMONS**

The older I get, the more I realize that there is a huge difference between speaking effectively, perhaps even brilliantly, and actually changing anybody’s life.

It’s one thing to impress a person, move a heart, inspire someone, reveal the depth of some truth, help someone to understand himself or herself more deeply, or to teach and minister in a way that brings admiration. No small thing. But it’s something else, something much more difficult, to move someone in such a way that he or she actually changes and gives up the habits, compensations, addictions, indulgences, fears, and angers that stand between him and her and the joy of being a saint.

Even when we are at our best, we are still not very effective in helping each other better our lives. In effect, people listen to us and say: “You’re wonderful, but this isn’t going to change my life!” Like John the Baptist, we can point out the way, but not able to help affect the transformation that’s needed for someone to actually change his or her way of life. That’s why there’s a lot more admiration than transformation inside religious and moral circles.

There’s a story about a troubled mother who had a daughter who was addicted to sweets. One day she approached Gandhi, explained the problem to him and asked whether he might talk to the young girl. Gandhi replied: “Bring your daughter to me in

three weeks' time and I will speak to her." After three weeks, the mother brought her daughter to him. He took the young girl aside and spoke to her about the harmful effects of eating sweets excessively and urged her to abandon her bad habit. The mother thanked Gandhi for this advice and then asked him: "But why didn't you speak to her three weeks ago?" Gandhi replied: "Because three weeks ago, I was still addicted to sweets."

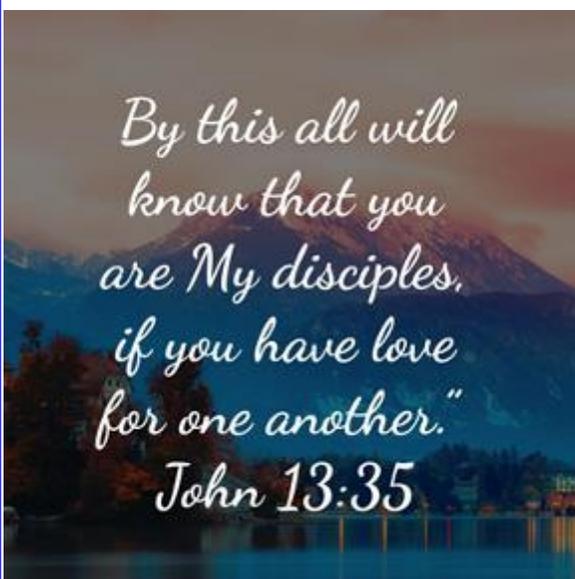


And there's the lesson: We must do more than just point out the right road to others, we must be on that road ourselves. For this reason, the integrity of our private lives and private morals, down to the smallest detail, is the real power behind our words.

Ron Rolheiser, San Antonio, Texas

## IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE JESUS IS NOT THE MESSIAH

In his new book "MetaChurch: How to Use Digital Ministry to Reach People and Make Disciples" Pastor Dave Adamson shares a conversation he had with his good friend from New Jersey, Rabbi Lubin. Once he asked him a question, probably "politically incorrect" but as a friend so appropriate, "Why you don't believe Jesus was the Messiah?" The Rabbi answered straight to the point, "I believe Jesus was a great rabbi; but I cannot accept Jesus as Messiah because his followers have done so many destructive things in his name. Jews judge a rabbi based on the behavior of their followers. The behavior of the disciple reflects the authority of the rabbi."



Ouch... That's a bold statement! Even though, as a first reaction, we would be tempted to defend our beliefs, rather than see it as a call to examination of conscience and renewal of our discipleship of Christ. When we are honest, sometimes the words, behaviors and actions of some Christians might send the message: "It might look like Jesus is not the Messiah". It is a call to conversion, a call to the initial mission entrusted to us by Christ, as we read in the Gospel this weekend, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35) If we have love for one another, it shows in our day to day witness though words, deeds and action. It's

proof that Jesus is the Messiah!

After a few months in St. Patrick parish in Hamilton, ON, we invited a selected group of parishioners to help us discern a mission and vision statement for our faith community. The group included members from different backgrounds, ages and experiences of the parish life. However, all of them entered this exercise with a sincere love for the parish and openness to seek God's call. It was extensive time of reflection and prayer, open conversation and listening for the Spirit. We based our discernment on the book "Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Making Church Matter" by Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran. We crafted a meaningful and purposeful Mission Statement, to which we continue to refer to in decision making and setting particular strategies for the parish. We also sought for a motto that will be one sentence "rally cry" in our ministry. An inspiration came from the inscription written on the beam above the sanctuary, "*Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum*" meaning "Christ loves us and gave himself up for us" Eph 5:2



"Love Others as Christ Loves You!" became the motto and guiding light in our ministry. Out of that love we focus on hospitality and welcome to all; where everybody feels at home. Out of that love we extended our ministry beyond the walls to the streets of the inner-city. Out of that love De Mazenod Door Outreach provides food, medical and social assistance, housing and sense of community to the poor, working with and for the homeless and marginalized of our community. We might be not perfect, as individuals and community, but at least we strive to witness that Jesus is the Messiah after

all.

The question remains, "How do I personally witness to my faith in Christ?" Jesus didn't say that people will recognize that we are his disciples by intensity of prayers, the thickness of the incense in the place of worship, the religious symbols we wear or "wisdom" of words we would say. Love is the only proof! "Love Others as Christ Loves You!" By doing so, we might convince Rabbi Lubin and others that Jesus is the Messiah! "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35)

Jarek Pachocki, OMI, Vocation Director

## THE INCLUSIVE EMBRACE OF CATHOLICISM

Catholicism is meant to be a stretch, a huge one, taking us where we would rather not go, beyond our comfort zone, beyond our own kind, beyond the like-minded.

Jesus said: “In my Father’s house there are many rooms!” That’s also meant to be a description, at least ideally, of Christianity, Catholicism, the church, and our theological and ideological embrace.

Allow me an example: Most every year, I attend a Religious Education Congress (sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles) in Anaheim, California. It’s always an uplifting, faith-filled event where more than 30,000 Christians come together to reflect on and celebrate their faith.

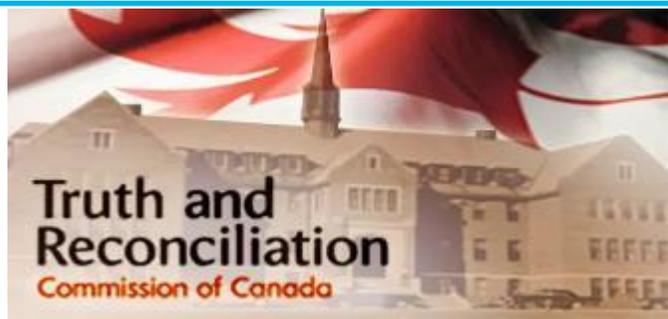
One of the little sub-themes there that I’ve always enjoyed is the particular placing of some of the book displays in the pavilion where the various publishers sell their wares. Invariably you will find, side by side, the booths for the CATHOLIC WORKER and IGNATIUS PRESS. They’re miles apart ideologically yet here they are, side by side, on very friendly terms, participating in the same faith event, both representing something important within the same tradition, neither bent on excluding the other.

There’s something important, I believe, to be learned from this, and not just for Roman Catholics. To build community we need to work with more than just those who are like-minded. Any community or church built with just the like-minded is not worth belonging to because it reflects neither what’s best inside the human spirit nor, for those of us who are Christians, the inclusive embrace of Christ.

But that doesn’t come naturally. What does come naturally is the proclivity to huddle together in fear and like-mindedness, like the disciples before Pentecost, barricaded behind locked door with our own kind, paranoid, suspicious of all who are not of our own mind. They huddled together for a while for a purpose, in fear, in loneliness, consoling each other within a certain fragility; but when they finally felt the real power of God’s spirit, they burst out of those narrow confines .



Ron Rolheiser, San Antonio, Texas



## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

**Call to Action n° 84:** “We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada’s national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to: Increasing Aboriginal programming, ...including Aboriginal-language speakers.”

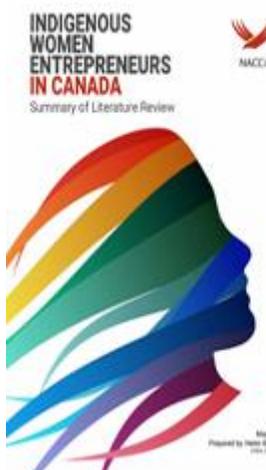
- **We pray for the diffusion on CBC/ Radio-Canada of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including Aboriginal-language speaker programs.**



## MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS REPORT

**Call for Justice n° 4.2:** We call upon all governments to recognize Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the pursuit of economic social development. All governments must support and resource economic and social progress and development on an equitable basis, as these measures are required to uphold the human dignity, life, liberty, and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. All governments must support and resource community-based supports and solutions designed to improve social and economic security, led by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This support must come with long-term, sustainable funding designed to meet the needs and objectives as defined by Indigenous Peoples and communities.

- **We pray for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the pursuit of economic social development, and the provision of necessary public fundings to support them.**



## **READINGS FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

### **FIRST READING**

#### **A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 14.21b-27)**

Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." And after they had appointed elders for them in each Church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed.

When they arrived, they called the Church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Psalm 145)**

**Response: I will bless your name forever, my king and my God.**

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. R.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power. R.

To make known to human beings your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendour of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. R.

### **SECOND READING**

#### **A reading from the Revelation to John (Revelation 21.1-5a)**

Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among humans. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new."

**Thanks be to God**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia. Alleluia.**

I give you a new commandment: love one another just as I have loved you.

**Alleluia.**

## GOSPEL READING

**A reading from the Gospel according to John (13.1, 31-33a, 34-35)**

Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

During the supper, when Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

"Little children, I am with you only a little longer. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

## Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples

Please make **cheques** payable to:

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