

6th Sunday of Easter

As a kid, I never appreciated the wisdom, philosophy, and theology often found in the ordinary comics of the daily newspapers.....

.....one such strip is “Stone Soup in which cartoonist Jan Eliot’s take on the modern family as seen through the trials and tribulations of two sisters.....Val and Joan....and their families.

One series of strips chronicled 13-year-old Holly’s spring-break trip to California....

**.....Holly, a teen drama queen of the first order,
.....has been invited by her “cool” Aunt Margie to Calif. For a week.**

Holly thinks she’s going for a week of sun, surfing and shopping....

....but she arrives to find that she has been “volunteered” by her aunt to work on a Habitat for Humanity project.

At first, she is furious that she has to spend her week off from school working at a construction site....

.....but during the week she meets the family who will move into the home....including their 13-year-old daughter Gini....

Holly is genuinely moved by the family’s plight and realizes that she could not have had a better, more fulfilling spring break.

Holly and Aunt Margie spend her last day in California at the beach.....the week has had a profound effect on her:

“Aunt Margie? Thanks for inviting ^{me} ~~us~~ to visit.” Holly says.....

“I hope you had fun...” her Aunt replies....

“Oh, I did.....I didn’t think I would....but helping to build a house for charity.....I never thought I could do something.....so.....so....”

“Important???” Aunt Margie offers.....

Moving? Satisfying??

Holly looks at her red, chapped hands.....”Who knew blisters could feel so good.”

Holly discovers the joy that can only be experienced by giving to others...

.....the fulfillment that comes from emptying ourselves of our own wants, and putting aside our own needs to help others realize their wants and needs.

This is exactly the love of God...(between Creator and Redeemer)... that Jesus speaks of in today’s Gospel....

.....that is how the peace of the Risen Christ is realized ^{is} ~~is~~ our homes and communities;

.....that is the Spirit, the Advocate/Paraclete, leading us and animating us to transform our world.

In his Last Supper discourse, Jesus leaves his fledgling Church his gift of peace and the promise of the Spirit.....

Peace that is of Christ is not just the absence of violence or conflict...

...but a deep sense of love, justice, truth and mercy,

...and understanding of our connectedness to one another as children of the same God that are the principal motivations

of our actions....behaviors....and values....

Gospel peace is not passive;

...it calls for an active response from us:

...to work to break through the barriers which divide us,

...to learn to understand one another....and to pardon those

who hurt us. --- to build bridges & break down walls---

Christ's peace is that sense within us that compels us to spend our spring breaks building Habitat Housing...⁽¹⁾going on Pilgrimages with

Food for the Poor...⁽²⁾visiting our sister parish in Mexico or

Jamaica...⁽³⁾Volunteering at the Samaritan Center ⁽⁴⁾ or wherever extra hands are needed --- ⁽⁵⁾

Christ's peace inspires us to volunteer for one of our parish's many ministries of compassion and support to children, family, the poor, or the elderly.....

.....that gives us the grace and courage to stand up and sacrifice for what is right and just in our communities and nation.

The Advocate....or Paraclete....who intercedes and intervenes on behalf of good.....is the exact opposite of the "adversary," Satan. or Evil.

The Advocat/Paraclete is that presence of God within us that opens our hearts and minds to the promptings of God's Word as proclaimed by Jesus Himself....

We believe....you and I...we believe, that in sacrament, in Scripture, in community, in our living of the Gospel in our everyday lives....the Risen Christ is in our midst.

In even our smallest act of selfless kindness....we reveal the presence of the Easter Christ in our little piece of the world.

Every little bit of food offered to the local neighborhood food pantry....every minute spent in faith formation classes with our children passing on our faith traditions and beliefs.....every card of care and concern sent to our elders and shut-ins and infirm.....every time you welcome a stranger or visitor to the Table of the Lord....

In such moments, you bring the hand of Christ upon the heart of one ^{our} of brothers or sisters.....

Like Holly, may we discover the Christ-like joy of "blisters" suffered in the pursuit of bringing the love of God into our homes and hearts.

- often of strangers -

And with that in mind, would you close your eyes and allow this prayer fill ^{to} your soul today:

*Send your Spirit upon us, O God,
that we may realize the joy of being your sons, ^{you} and daughters, ^{your} *your shell.**

*Come, make your dwelling in us,
that we may become vessels of your grace and peace
for all homes and hearts.*

*Plant the seed of your Word within us,
that we may become branches of your compassion
in the most barren places.*

*May the Advocate make us, in our own time and place,
teachers of your just Word, prophets of your coming reign,
witnesses of your compassion and grace in this life and in the life to
come. Amen.....Amen....*