

From Fr. David:

NO PLACE FOR HATRED AND VIOLENCE

Dear Resurrection Sisters and Brothers in Christ and our friends, who frequent our newsletter;

The recent events that have taken place in our country, and really around the world, that include racism and violence toward people is unconscionable. Purely by the fact that we live in an affluent country, enjoy many amenities of comfort, makes all of us, regardless of race, religion or place of origin “privileged” compared to those who live on the fringes of life, for whatever their reason or cause, and who are treated without dignity and respect. To witness and observe the actions of some, as we have seen played out in the media in Charlottesville and in other places in our country should be appalling to all of us. I grew up as a very impressionable young person during the riots in Detroit, Flint and other cities in the 1967-68 racial tension. I went to an integrated high school where I was in the minority and witnessed the tension of race, inequality and white privilege. My parents did the best they could to shield me and my family from what they knew was going on in other cities and communities around us, but trust me, I knew. I knew because I was confronted with it every day in school. Will what is happening now in our country change for the better? Not unless we seriously commit ourselves to the message of Jesus Christ.

Moses never made it to the Promised Land. The Israelite adult people of power had to die-off in the great migration as they left Egypt for the Promised Land in order to truly hear and understand what Moses was trying to teach them. It was a *new generation* of people that reclaimed who the Hebrews were as God would have them be. Is that what it will take for all of us to truly understand the inequity of our time? Must there be a new generation of people, even beyond this Millennial Generation to make a difference? I pray that we be brave to embrace what is right, good and just in caring for our neighbors, and take a stand against prejudice and hatred of all kinds. We are only a chosen people by God because he created us equally in his own image.

Attached is a portion of a message recently posted by our diocesan bishop, Martin Field. I encourage you to read it in its entirety in the eSpirit sent out on Thursday.

How do I react to that truth? What do I do about it? (from Bishop Marty)

Right now, my thoughts take me back to the five baptismal promises that, together with the Nicene Creed, form The Baptismal Covenant of The Episcopal Church (see p. 304-5, The Book of Common Prayer, 1979). They’re all pertinent to this sad occurrence, but the 2nd, 4th, and 5th are most applicable:

- 2.) Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
- 4.) Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

5.) Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

To all these questions, each individual answers: “**I will, with God’s help.**” This is her or his expression of intent. Here are the lessons I learn anew in this moment by revisiting numbers 2, 4, & 5.

To resist evil, I must acknowledge that evil is also part of me. Resisting evil will not make me good. Whenever I resist evil, I stand the very real chance of falling into sin. I may become the mirror image of that which I resist. I think that happened in Charlotte. Clearly there was enough confrontation, enough in-your-face derision and contempt from both sides to set off what happened. Yes, a single fanatic drove the car into the crowd injuring many and killing a woman who, by all reports, was a concerned and caring person. But this was mob mentality. And there was a bit too much of it on all sides. So, repent we must. I must. For even though I wasn’t there, I cannot say I have had no part in racism’s persistence on this globe. My sins are surely sins of omission as well as commission. When I resist evil, I may fall into sin. I must keep that in mind lest I sanctify my hate, consecrate how I dehumanize another, or hallow my false assumption that I am superior because my beliefs are so much purer.

I am called to love Christ in all persons because each person I meet is Christ in disguise. Jesus made that clear, so I am called to love Christ in all persons. Not white ones or black ones or those of any other hue. All persons. I promised to do that. I’ve renewed that promise uncounted times. I’m supposed to mean it. Loving my neighbor as myself is hard because I don’t get to choose who my neighbor is. I have never had control of who enters my life – maybe over who continues in my life – but never over who enters. I have promised to love that person be she a stranger, newly met, or be he a beloved friend of long-standing. I have vowed to love my neighbor as myself even if he joins the White Nationalists, even if she rallies with Neo-Nazis, even if he puts on the bed-sheet hood of a KKKlansman. That person too is the Christ I am to seek and serve. Wow that’s hard.

It strikes close to home, too. My extended family, in the last several years, has become gloriously colorful. By that I mean, we are no longer all of European descent, aka white. My son is married to a woman who is at least partly of African descent, who unabashedly shares that she has a multi-racial background. She is my daughter. Period. My wife’s sister’s daughter, our niece, just got engaged to a man she met in college; he too is of African descent. I look forward to the day when he is my nephew. My niece’s brother, our nephew, recently married a Turkish woman who is Muslim. I’m going to Maine in September to their U.S. wedding reception (the big party in Turkey was a couple of weeks ago). I am happy beyond words that they found each other.

Resist evil. Repent. Love your neighbor who is Christ in disguise. What else?

Oh yes. **Strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of all.** These certainly go hand-in-hand with and build upon the other two. To seek justice and peace is not to seek victory. Justice is not served by squashing our neighbor, nor by using war to impose peace. Everyone — and this includes those who believe their white supremacist creed, or any other belief I would classify as bigotry — are children of their Creator God. That — not their actions — means they deserve

their dignity; that means I must respect their dignity as I have promised. It would be nice if they'd respect me in return, or respect their neighbors, their fellow human beings, in return. However, the promises I made to God, when I answered the Baptismal Covenant questions as I did, do not have a proviso about reciprocity. It is not, I'll respect their dignity if they respect mine. My promise has no quid pro quos.

In the end, this is not about politics and groupings as much as it is about values. Both sides need to respect the other side. Though I'm not so naïve as to think that respect will blossom like wild flowers in the near future, that is the world we are called to build. That is God's dream for his creation.

I pray that I will be a voice who can promote the civility needed to seek the ground of our common humanity. There's too much shouting. Never once has another person or group of persons been converted to my point of view because I screamed at him or her. Or threatened. Or hurled insults. But sometimes — if I respect their dignity, love them as a neighbor because they are Christ present to me, strive for justice and peace for them not just for me, and resist evil and repent when I fall into sin — just sometimes, I am able to understand where another person is coming from, share my values, and help that person see another way to live and move and have their being.

The Church spread through the first century world, one person at a time. The Christ-given values the Church espouses can be spread the same way.

Here is the link to the whole statement made by Bishop Marty. I encourage all to read...
http://www.diowestmo.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3187411

Blessing of the "back packs" and school supplies this "Kick-Off" Sunday

Dear folks, and especially families with children and adults going to school. We will bless back packs, students and teachers, so please bring your school bags, books and supplies (even if not in a back pack) to be blessed during our services on Sunday morning.

Program Year Calendar available on the church website

There are many programs listed on our church calendar that will provide our parish with spiritual and fellowship enrichment from now through March of 2018. Elaine is also providing information in upcoming events in our bulletin announcements each week. Some of these events and programs include:

- CPR/AED training (This Saturday 8/19)
- Inquirers class (starting Wednesday evenings in September)
- Forums that are planned for between our services throughout the coming year will include but not be limited to:
 - Return of Dr. William Stancel for some interesting theological discussions

- Presentations from
 - Buddhist Monk
 - Jewish Rabbi
 - Islamic Cleric
 - The St. Francis Society
 - Melody Chrisman and the Community Service League
- Blessings of Animals in October
- Other outings for families
 - Cedar Cove Large Cat Reserve
 - Movie nights
 - Game nights
- Lenten dinners with our Ecumenical Church Friends
- **AND MUCH, MUCH MORE! *STAY TUNED!***