

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Fifth Sunday of Easter

By: Fr. Greg Ames

I love the writing of Anne Lamott. She writes: *My mother turns to Sam. "Let's go for a walk," she says. He doesn't want to. He always wants to race down to the shore and just plunge in. But he's glad to be with her. The fact that she's wearing a sweater does not seem to annoy him. I watch carefully. I tell you, families are definitely the training ground for forgiveness. At some point you pardon the people in your family for being stuck together in all their weirdness and when you do that, you can learn to pardon anyone. Even yourself, eventually. It's like learning to drive on an old car with a tricky transmission: if you can master shifting gears on that, you can learn to drive anything. I keep watching. Sam takes his grandmother's hand. I feel like sobbing with grief that my mother is old, that she won't always be around, and with despair at what an erratic daughter I am. But it's no big deal to Sam. He just wants her to find her balance.*

This is how all will know that you are my disciples...

Finding your balance. It is something we want to do; need to do. For some of us, life is busy and there is never enough time. For others, we wonder what is the purpose of being here. How do I live a Christian life amid all that competes for my attention and time.

These days, there is a great deal of discussion about what it means to be a Christian; specially, what does it mean to be a good Catholic. It is an important question; but not one that can be answered on Meet the Press, or in a newspaper article, or even in a three pointed homily. It is a question that goes to the heart of who you are, why you believe you are here, what gives meaning to your life. Each of us has to ask the question of ourselves first. Each of us must look inward: how do I find the balance amid so many conflicts in my life; how do I let Jesus take my hand and lead? It is hard work—can take a lifetime to figure out—it is much more interesting to look at someone else, someone in the spotlight or your next door neighbor. But today, I want you to start looking inward. It involves PRAYER, and PASSION and the PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE.

PRAYER Note the quick Hail Mary or a grace at meals or even showing up to Mass. That does not make you a good "anything." To be an authentic follower of Christ means I have to take his word, I have to take the

traditions of the community, and sit with them each day. I need to be quiet, listen and take the hand of Jesus, not just when I need something. That is why so many of us are out of balance. Prayer is what Paul speaks about in the first reading: commending my life to the Lord each day.

PASSION You are passionate about your job, or maybe a sports team, or a hobby. There are things for which we have an enthusiasm, an inner drive, joy. At the last supper, Jesus looks at his disciples and wonders, do they get it. He has been preaching about justice, about service, about forgiveness, about God's great care for them. No one will believe any of this based on the attitude of these disciples. That is why he gives them the command, that charge, that mission: be passionate about these things; make them the center of who you are; otherwise service is volunteerism and forgiveness is just being nice.

PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE What is the purpose of your life? What would you write down if I passed out paper; what would you say if I passed the microphone around? Would it be: *The purpose of my life is to allow God to use me and my gifts to reveal the life of Jesus.* And this is what is big. This is what is so challenging. See, God does not necessarily have some big plan for your life; but there is a purpose. And the challenge is to live that purpose authentically with family members who drive you crazy, with co workers or neighbors you don't like.

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Maybe if we said it often enough, we might begin to live it more often; and we might understand what he meant when he said, "This is how all will know you are my disciples."

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Acts 14:21-27

Revelations 21:1-5

John 13:31-35

April 28, 2013

靈 修 生 活

復 活 期 第 五 主 日

陳 百 希 神 父

今天的福音是耶穌在晚餐廳中的訓話，猶達斯那叛徒已出去了，耶穌給祂最知心的朋友說出了肺腑之言：「現在人子受到了光榮，天主也在人子身上受到了光榮。」光榮是指他的踰越奧跡：從痛苦到光榮，從死亡到復活。天父不但籍子而受到光榮，並且還要光榮子。「孩子們！我同你們在一起的時候不多了。」耶穌知道幾小時後要被捕，二十四小時後要死亡，雖然第三天要復活，但復活以後只停留在這世界上四十天，而且不常和宗徒們在一起，所以說出了這樣依依不捨的話。古語說：「鳥之將死其鳴也哀，人之將死其言也善。」接下去耶穌說：「我給你們一條新命令：你們該彼此相愛；如同我愛了你們……如果你們彼此相愛，世人就可因此認出你們是我的門徒。」

愛人是十誡總綱「愛主愛人」之半，十誡中後七誡都是針對愛人的，為什麼耶穌還說是「新」的誡命呢？新在那裡？新在「如同耶穌愛了人們」，愛得徹底，甚至為人犧牲生命，甚至愛仇。耶穌說：「我不是來廢除法律，而是來完成」（瑪五 17）。你們聽說過：「你應愛你的近人！恨你的仇人。我卻對你們說：當愛你們的仇人，為迫害你們的人祈禱。」（瑪五 43 以下）現在我們分三點來討論：為什麼愛人？怎麼樣愛人？如何發展愛德？

一、為什麼愛人？ 有三個理由：第一、因為眾人都是天主的肖像，創世紀說：天主按祂的肖像創造了人，我們愛父母也愛他的肖像；我們愛總統也愛他的肖像；同樣地我們愛天主也應愛祂的肖像----人。第二、因為眾人的靈魂都是耶穌用聖血救贖的；我們的朋友若流汗流血，冒着性命得來的東西，我們一定非常珍惜它，因着同樣理由，我們應該愛人。第三、天主是我們的父親，我們大家都是弟兄姊妹，所以應該彼此相愛。

二、怎麼樣愛人？ 孔子說：「己所不欲勿施於人」，在今日的社會上能做到這點，已經不錯，已經可以減少許多罪惡，但終究還是消極的。耶穌更積極地說：「己所欲施於人」，儘量在思、言、行各方面幫助人，譬如我常設身處地替人往好處想，有人得罪我，我可想他不是故意的，也許他身體不好，情緒不好，受了打擊才說出這樣的話。在言語方面多說鼓勵安慰等積極的話。行為方面，多具體幫助人，另外幫助人恭敬天主，多注意靈魂的事。

我們要愛得徹底，所謂「幫人幫到底送人送到家」，耶穌就是愛人至死，死在十字架上。我們不要只有口頭上愛人，或只做表面文章，這是為基督不夠的。

我們愛人到「有愛無類」，就是什麼都愛，連仇人也不例外，耶穌說過：「當愛你們的仇人，為迫害你們的人祈禱，這樣才成為在天之父的子女……你們若愛那愛你們的人，你們還有什麼賞報呢？稅吏不是也這樣做嗎？」（瑪五 44-46）。就是從心裡寬赦他人，不懷恨在心，為仇人祈禱，使他們改過遷善，見面要有普通禮貌，不要冷戰也不要過份親熱。

三、如何發展愛德？ 要發展愛德，應常常存想愛德是耶穌給我們的新命令，而且也是將來公審判時的標準（瑪二五 31-46）。其次勤領告解及聖體聖事，前者為除去愛德的阻礙----罪惡，使我們與天父及弟兄們重歸和好；後者是愛情的聖事，愛情之源耶穌親自到我們心中來，喜有不增加愛德嗎？最後多做榮主救人的事，自然會加增愛德。印度德肋撒修女說：「今日最大的病，不是癩病，也不是肺病，而是被人遺棄；今日最大的罪惡，是缺乏愛，對貧病人的冷漠無情。」可見多麼需要愛，我們大家勉勵吧！

摘自「主日靈修」

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 三 年 四 月 廿 八 日

宗 14:21-27 ; 默 21:1-5 ; 若 13:31-35