

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission

Fourth Sunday of Easter ~ May 8, 2022

Acts 13:14, 43-62; Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5; Revelation 7:9, 14b-17; John 10:27-30

THE HOMILY ~ Fr. Ed Hislop

The vision, in the midst of these Easter days, is both extraordinary and almost unbelievable, though it is echoed again and again through all of scripture: “A great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue, dressed in white garments” — seamless, woven garments of Baptism and life—so that all, despite the unique differences, experiences and even opinions, are all standing as one, one in difference, one in presence, one in mission—survivors, John says, of great distress. Survivors, some still in tears, some filled with hunger and thirst for peace, some longing for the fullness of life; equality and respect; all with questions flowing from the complex human struggle to be fully alive. There they are with vision, able to see through the distress, differences, challenges, and difficulties, with hope gazing at one another in awe, that though not the same, they have all been to the water of hope, washed clean, made new, new in new ways. Woven “survivors,” knit together one and all. “They shall never perish!”

It is, perhaps, faithfulness to that woven grace which Paul and Barnabus plead with those in that new Church to embrace. Faithful, despite every urge to not believe, see, listen or live the truth of the Gospel. Faithful despite every temptation to cast the garment aside. Faithful to being different, but still standing together before the throne of God, who is Father and lover of all. Faithful to life and the life of all. Faithful to listening with a reverent ear and open heart. Faithful to being and becoming a “holy communion” of seamless diversity, the Easter vision of Revelation, when words of tolerance, welcome, and compassion are both spoken, heard, and lived.

John’s vision frightens some, even today, with “jealousy and violent abuse,” Hateful rage over life in all of its dimensions and circumstance, becomes so loud and boisterous that the cry for help cannot



or will not be heard, or the flowing tears of so many are not seen or wiped away. Listening ceases, compassion perishes, and judgement reigns.

But we, the many, wearing the white robes of baptism—a great multitude, are to be “a light, an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.” A light for life, not just for some, but for all. A light embracing life as a gift from beginning to end; “a seamless garment,” a woven gift deliberately made, with all its beauty, mystery, complications, struggles and joy. Each life seamlessly connected to every life from generation to generation. “*We all belong to God, he made us, his we are, his people, the flock he tends.*”

The life of all: the unborn and the born, the migrant and those running for their lives. The victims, excluded, shunned, judged; the hungry, homeless, thirsty, those held captive; victims of war and hate. This is life, all of life here and in every place.

Life, complicated and uncertain; life filled with mystery and wonder. Life, the image, and likeness of God! We who stand with the many clothed in white garments, live life, honor life, “survive” life, respect life, serve life, not just in some ways, but in every way. Not just one life or some life, but every life “destined for eternal life!”

Life embraced as gift, from beginning to end, with all its beauty, complications, mystery, struggle, and joy. The life of all: the unborn and the newly born, women and men, young and old, the migrant, victimized, excluded, judged, the hungry, thirsty, and those whose life is filled with tears.

The words of Jesus echo through these days of Easter life and hope: "My sheep hear my voice:

I know them, and they follow me.

No one can take them out of my hand."

"I give them eternal life;

and they shall never perish!"

