

Easter 5
Year C 2019

Rev 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

Come Holy Spirit, give life to my words.

In the name of God, creator, redeemer and giver of life.

Amen.

Yesterday we consecrated and ordained the 11th Bishop of Colorado, the Right Reverend Kym Lucas.

It was an amazing moment in the history of the Episcopal Church in Colorado and the greater Episcopal Church.

We were privileged to host a number of clergy and laity from around the country.

And as I looked around,
I saw how far we have come in just my lifetime.

The depth and breadth of our church.

Female and male.

Young and old.

The spectrum of skin tone from deep brown to white.

All surrounding one woman,
called by God, to lead us closer to the New Jerusalem.

We heard a powerful sermon
from Reverend Kelly Brown Douglas,
Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School
at Union Theological Seminary.

Reverend Douglas reminded us,
very frankly, of God's desire for all of us
to treat each other with respect, care and love.

She boldly spoke of the many ways
in which we have fallen short
of living into the fullness of the beings God created us to be.

We hear echoes of this in our Scriptures today.

In our Gospel reading,
we are reminded that Jesus,
at the last supper,
gives the disciples the new commandment
to love one another as they have been loved.

And what do they know of the love of Jesus?

They know that it is unconditional.

Wherever they were in their journey,
whether faithful, steadfast, questioning, seeking, or doubting,
Jesus loved them to the end.

Even those who turned their backs on him,
Jesus loved.

He bent on his knees and washed the feet of Judas.

This is the unconditional, all encompassing,
compassionate love which Jesus commands.

But why such a demanding love?

Because we have seen that *this* love,
the love that is showered upon
the daughter of the leader of the synagogue
and also on the three lepers,
Is the love that binds us together
and draws us near to God's vision for all humanity.

Whether we are wealthy and powerful, poor or ostracized,
this love,
God's love made known to us in Jesus,
is the love that knows no nationalities,
race, gender, religion, or status.

When, and only when,
we truly live our lives
extending *this* love to all humanity
will we know the New Jerusalem.

You see, the New Jerusalem doesn't exist
just as a vision in Scripture.

The New Jerusalem doesn't exist
in some ethereal place,
up there or beyond our reach.

No, my brothers and sisters,
the New Jerusalem is intended to be right here.

We just need to love one another as Christ has loved us.

Just, I say.

As if it were the easiest thing in the world.

It's not.

But it's also not the hardest.

The more difficult task is to constantly turning away,
denying the existence of the pain and suffering that exists,
building and maintaining walls around ourselves,
all in the false attempt to shield ourselves.

That my friends is far more difficult, time consuming, and
draining.

We know one person cannot solve everything.

But we also know, that when a few people work together,
in love and for love,
then our hearts are less heavy and we are more fulfilled and
happy.

When we come together in community
to stretch the bounds of community in recognizing the dignity of
each and every other child of God,
then we are living into Jesus' commandment.

And it is then, that the New Jerusalem, will come down,
and God will dwell with us.

Here in this place.

This earth that God has created for us
and showed us through the life of Jesus,
that can be a place inhabited by love.

These words are trustworthy and true.

But we must act.

We must act now.

There is no other time that will be better than this time.

Our time.

Our children are killing each other with guns for the profit of
others.

Our neighbors are dying at the end of a needle for the profit of
others.

Our elderly and low income neighbors are losing their homes for the profit of others.

Our neighbors of color are being incarcerated for the profit of others.

Our environment and its resources are being abused, misused, and depleted for the profit of others.

This is our place, our time, our opportunity.

What will we do?

Will we love one another as Jesus loves us?