

## SOLIDARITY ALONE?



The mission of the Church is to reveal the love of God, made manifest in Jesus Christ, to all persons (cf. 1John 4:9). This is the rationale for believing in the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor.

This is also the rationale for the Catholic principle of solidarity.

“We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be.” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship*, 53)

Solidarity is about living in unity with each other. One cannot be in solidarity alone.

Solidarity is about living as equals with each other. One cannot be in solidarity with another while being “better” than him or her.

In each of today’s readings and Responsorial Psalm, we find examples of people acting as if they were better than another. In Wisdom it is the wicked, “The wicked say: Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings, reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training.

In the Responsorial Psalm it is the haughty and the ruthless, “For the haughty men have risen up against me, the ruthless seek my life; they set not God before their eyes.

In the second reading it is those who are selfishly ambitious, looking out for themselves rather than each other, “Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice.”

In the Gospel reading it’s the apostles themselves, “They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.”

**The first step toward solidarity is an internal, personal conversion that strives for humility.** Jesus warned the apostles of the consequences of pride, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”

**The second step toward solidarity is to cultivate peace.**

St. James asks rhetorically, “Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members?”

For James explains, “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.”

We cultivate peace by removing the obstacles of envy and passion and, once freed, making the journey towards humility, towards each other, and towards the love of God.

“Our commitment to solidarity with our neighbors—at home and abroad—also demands that we [cultivate] peace and pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict.” (*Faithful Citizenship*, 53)

Solidarity: the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor, which leads to peace.

(Sunday Readings for September 20, 2015)