

The Gospel today proclaims, on some level, Jesus' greatest directive: love one another. Still seated around the table with his disciples at the final meal that we have come to know as the Last Supper he says "my children; I will be with you just a little while longer, I give you a new commandment 'love one another.'" Jesus is relentlessly in love with the world. And thank God for such a love; it gives us hope among the chaos of humanity that we see or hear about every single day. Where would we be without it? I suggest we would be lost travelers. Love, is the heart of the Easter message: The world says, "No!" / Jesus says, "YES!" / The world says, "Not yet." / Jesus says, "Right now!" / The world says, "Shorter -faster." / Jesus says, "Longer - slower!" / The world says, "Narrower." / Jesus says, "Wider!" / The world says, "Smaller." / Jesus says, "Bigger!" / The world says, "Shallower." / Jesus says, "Dig Deeper!" / The world says, "Punish." / Jesus says, "Mercy!" / The world says, "Hate." / Jesus says, "Love!" / The world says, "Just a few." / Jesus says, "Everyone!" / The world says, "Threaten him!" / Jesus says, "That won't stop me!" / The world says, "Arrest him!" / Jesus says, "That won't stop me!" / The world says, "Wound him!" / Jesus says, "That won't stop me!" / The world

says, "kill him!" / Jesus says, "That won't stop me!" / The world says, "Shut him up in a tomb!" / Jesus says, "That won't stop me!" And for 2,000 years His message has come through time to us, and has played out in humanity over and over through individuals who will not stop fighting the good fight. They are infused with the Spirit that will not quit.

You know his love, and I know his love; it is found in those who have helped us arrive where we are and helps us as we still grow no matter how old we are. It is: Mothers / Fathers / Brothers / Sisters / Grandparents / Sons / Daughters/ Friends / Teachers / and the list goes on and on. Too often, especially of late we look at the world and see the destruction and violence caused by hate – misguided souls for sure. It is indiscriminate; it is evil; it takes human life by sheer chance and coincidence in many cases.

It is easy to become disillusioned and only see the darkness. To ask the question; where do we go from here? Lord, where is your road? To find it this gospel calls us to look inside ourselves as Jesus did to the heart of what it is to be human. He says – this is the only way to save our world. Many stories have come through time and we hear of individuals who have risked life and limb to help others they barely

knew. There are countless accounts of these saintly and storied individuals who helped others since the beginning of recorded history. They are still among us even now working throughout the world; we may never learn their names or what they did or what they are still doing. That is known to God alone.

I recently read a book called, *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah. It is popular, and I am sure that many of you have read it. It is set in France, in 1939, as World War II is bubbling to the surface and moving across Europe with Hitler's thugs. The book centers around two sisters, Vianne and her sister Isabelle. They could not have been more different. Vianne is forced to take an enemy/German officer into her house, and suddenly her every move is watched; her life and her child's life is at constant risk. Without food, money or hope, as danger escalates around her, she must make one terrible choice after another just to survive the war.

Her sister, Isabelle, is a rebellious eighteen-year-old girl, searching for purpose with all the reckless passion of youth. While thousands of Parisians march into the unknown terrors of war, Isabelle races headlong into danger and joins the Resistance, never looking back or

giving a thought to the real--and deadly--consequences. *She volunteers for dangerous duty: shepherding downed Allied airmen across the mountains to Spain and safety. Code-named the Nightingale*, Isabelle will rescue many before she's captured. The author vividly describes how the Nazis, through starvation, intimidation and barbarity demoralized the French, engineering a community collapse that enabled the deportations and deaths of more than 70,000 French-Jews. Both sisters gave all they had and are broken by the war. Clearly Isabelle and others like her is who Jesus is referring to as he says: “This is how all will know ... my disciples, [with the] love [they have] for one another.” When the Mass ends, I say, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and “each other” – “the each other” is the hard part, but, nonetheless, it is our unique call as Christian disciples. In the end: will Jesus know us by what we have done for others; can we save this world by His mandate? God only knows.