

## **People for People**

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

June 27, 2021

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In our divided world, people are against people. Whereas once disagreements were a cause for healthy debate and discussion, now they are unhealthy personal attacks on others. As noted by Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers in their book *I Think You're Wrong, but I Am Listening*, as of 2016, of the members of both political parties who “had a ‘very unfavorable’ opinion of the other party, the majority reported to Pew [Research Center] that the opposing party’s policies represent a threat to the future of the country.” (25) This was not the case 25 years ago, where only a handful from each political party had a ‘very unfavorable’ view of the other party. It is sad that not only have we reached the point of nearly half of each party having a ‘very unfavorable’ opinion of other, but that a fair number of those people see the others as a threat to our country. This is not Christian, because Christians are never against people. We are always for people, all people.

Our first reading from the Book of Wisdom tells us why we are for people. It says, “for God fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome.” It continues, “God formed humanity to be imperishable; the image of God’s own nature God made them.” God created everything good. In fact, humans were created very good. Who are we to be against people?

I am sure we all heard the overused advice ‘love the sinner, hate the sin,’ but it is excellent advice. We must always love the person no

matter what, even if we object to their behavior. Unfortunately, we seem to have forgotten that line of distinction, especially in politics. We hate both the sinner and the sin. We hate both the person and their behavior. We hate both the political party and the politician. Again, this is not Christian.

Jesus was always in favor of people, all people. In today's Gospel, he was moved with compassion for two women: Jairus' little daughter and the woman suffering with a medical condition for 12 years. By the end of the story, both of them were healed and restored to health by him. As followers of Jesus, we, too, are called to be a healing presence to the people in our lives. To heal means that we fundamentally believe in their goodness, want to restore them to wholeness, and want to bring people together.

Because of the goodness and wholeness of each person, regardless of their behavior, we need to work towards greater equality of all people, as mentioned by St. Paul in our Second Reading. This equality is not based on productivity, economic worth, their ideas, or good behavior, but on the very fact of being human. The fact is all people are not equal. People being against people have created this injustice. If we want justice, we need to be people for people.

*As Christians, we are fundamentally for people. Are there people that I am against?*

As we continue to move through our divided world, we do sometimes have to take sides on the pressing issues that face us. In taking sides, however, let us remember that we are Christians. Deep down, we are always people for people.