

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity / Year A / June 7, 2020 (Fr. Giese)

Occasionally, there are events, more often than not horrific events, that shock the nation that become a permanent part of our collective and individual memory; the attack on Pearl Harbor for those old enough to remember it, the assassination of President Kennedy, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, and the attacks of September 11 th on the world trade center, the Pentagon, Flight #, 2001 are just some of them. I believe that the death of George Floyd while in police custody will become another one of those horrific events that becomes part of our shared experience.

The video of him lying on the street with the knee of the arresting officer planted on his neck for several minutes while he is saying he can't breathe is revolting, even sickening. We will all remember it. Like other horrifying events we won't forget it. It will always be somewhere in our minds, even years from now, and we will be able to recall those images at any time.

His death has engendered understandable and righteous anger which has manifested itself in protests and marches throughout the country and in other parts of the world as well. Unfortunately, there are some who have used the protests for their own purposes to sow division and cause hurt and the resulting confrontations have been disturbing to witness too, to say the least. However, they should not overshadow the larger issues of equal treatment and justice which all are basic human rights.

And this horrific event and its aftermath have occurred, are occurring, at an already difficult time because of the Corona virus epidemic and shutdown which has brought severe hardship to many, significant challenges to teachers and students, isolation to others especially the elderly, and grief to those who lost loved ones to the disease.

We need God. When I say 'we' I mean all of us, I mean the human race.

The truth is, we always need God, but there are moments, there are times when the need for God is inescapable. This is one of them. And the world needs to know what we know about God, what God has revealed to us and the righteousness to which God has called each and every one of his children.

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That is first thing we have to share with the world is precisely that. We are God's children, not in a poetic way of speaking and not in a generalized way of speaking that means nothing in reality. We are God's children, all of us, created on purpose by God and each of us having a purpose and each of us having God-given dignity and worth. That is our starting point when we look at others, when we deal with others, when we engage with others; they too belong to God as God's children and no human differences that we see change that. We may see these differences between us but God does not. To believe in God, to love God means to see others the way God does. We need God for that because on our own we have only our human sight and that is not nearly enough. We need God's eyes and God is willing to share His divine sight with us. That is why we need God. Made in the image of God, we are builders, we are creators and with the vision of God we can build communities that overcome our differences because we are able to see in one another the very presence of God. That is why the world needs us and our faith, to share this very knowledge we have of God and what we can be with the help of God.

You see Jesus Christ reveals to us what we can and should be as human beings. Was there anyone Jesus failed to understand, failed to heal, failed to forgive? Was there anyone Jesus encountered whose humanity Jesus did not value? Was there anyone Jesus thought was unworthy of the sacrifice of his death on the cross? No. Jesus even prayed for those responsible for his death and called the repentant criminal into paradise with him. The world needs to know the humanity of Jesus, it needs to know his example and gentle love. And the world needs us to reveal him in our words, our actions, and our faithfulness.

There is another thing the world needs us to reveal to it; the power to forgive that comes from the Holy Spirit. There are those who say, "No justice, no peace." But there is no lasting peace without forgiveness too. But forgiving others does not come easily to human beings. For some it never comes at all. But it does come from God and God shares that power with us. When the Risen Jesus appeared to the apostles in the locked room, he breathed on them for them to receive the Holy Spirit which empowered them to forgive sins, a divine power and an awesome gift.

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To forgive is divine but with the gift of the Holy Spirit it is also human and the world needs to know what we know, that forgiving others from the heart is possible and absolutely necessary for peace. Justice un-tempered by mercy brings no lasting peace. Justice must always come with mercy for there to be peace. We know that because we know Jesus, the Prince of Peace. We have received his forgiveness. We are anointed with the Holy Spirit. The world needs us now and our faith more than ever to reveal this very knowledge of peace and show the world where it found and how it is lived. You have been so very faithful these past many weeks without Mass in the church and Holy Communion to fortify your hearts and souls. And it may be that you are tired and weary with all the effort it takes to do everything, including practicing your faith. Do not give up. The world needs you and your faith in God. Find comfort in him and take consolation in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 40:30-31 New International Version (NIV)

30 Even youths grow tired and weary,

and young men stumble and fall;

31 but those who hope in the LORD

will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.