

HOMILY EASTER SUNDAY 5-C (Homily 02)

“Radical Newness”

(Acts 14:21b-27; Psalm 145; Rev 21:1-5a; John 13:1, 31-33a, 34-35)

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Here is a trivia question for you: What line in today’s readings is found in one of Mel Gibson’s movies?

A clue to the answer lies in the fact that radical newness almost leaps from the pages of all the readings today. New churches are being established by Paul and Barnabas in the first reading; we are given a new commandment by Jesus in the Gospel; and in the second reading St. John sees a new heaven and a new earth; a new Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the one seated on a throne declares, “See, I am making all things new.”

In short, all we need do is love one another as Jesus has loved us and all things will be made new.

Perhaps you have figured out the answer already. The last line of the reading from the book of Revelation is put into the mouth of Jesus in the movie “Passion of the Christ.” It occurs where Jesus, all bloodied, tortured and half dead, meets his mother on the way of the Cross. She gazes at him with pity and love, and he simply says, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

This is one of the brilliant moments in this powerful movie. The viewer is left wondering how this condemned innocent human being, taken as a criminal, could do anything at all except make it to his own crucifixion with some help from Simon of Cyrene.

Yet it is precisely that love which refuses to resort to violence, refuses to respond with vengeance, and in the end seeks only to forgive, that is the source of the radical newness permeating all the readings.

This love of God in Jesus Christ which shines through this darkest hour is the newness that the world had never seen before. It is this newness that tore open the barrier between heaven and earth and now makes possible a New Jerusalem in which all those who believe in Him and live in Him will dwell eternally.

It is this reality that explains the energy and excitement of Paul and Barnabas as they go around the Mediterranean turning the world upside down. They are full of

the Good News and spreading it.

This newness comes to realization as we live the gospel: “Love one another as Jesus loved us.” We can say there are four ways that Jesus loved us and how we can love one another.

First, Jesus understands us. Through the incarnation he became one of us and shared our reality. Trying to understand the hurtful other, to get inside the other person’s skin, is a new way of loving that other person.

Second, forgiveness is what Jesus was and what he did on the cross. Mary at the foot of the cross was the strong biblical woman, doing at the foot of the cross what Jesus was doing on the cross – forgiving those who were killing her Son. To forgive from the heart all those who hurt and abuse us is to love in a new way.

Third, achieving intimacy and showing affection is a way to love others as Jesus loved us. He enjoyed an intimate relationship with the Father, and was not afraid to show affection to his disciples, showing us another way to love.

Lastly, Jesus gave his life away in self sacrifice, and so must we, in lives of selfless service. Mother Theresa of Calcutta is perhaps one of the most outstanding persons in recent memory who modelled this for us, despite her experience of the apparent absence of God in her prayer life.

Our task, then, is to love one another as Jesus has loved us and all things will be made new.

The Eucharist that we celebrate now is a share in that newness of God made real in Jesus Christ. As we listen to His Word and receive his Body and Blood, we are made new and sent out to share this radical newness with the world.