

Commentary to the 5th Sunday of Easter C



Message: Love is to will the good of the other - that he will become a citizen of the New Jerusalem.

Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment: love one another." We hear a lot about love, but we often do not know what the word really means. We tend to think of love as good feelings toward others. For sure, love includes positive emotions - and it harnesses them. But love - as Jesus describes it - involves much more than feelings.

Love resides in the will. St. Thomas Aquinas defined love as "to will the good of the other."* Love means to desire what is best for the other person. Your neighbor - your spouse, your child, your co-worker - might need a lot of things, but what the best, what is the greatest thing you can will for your neighbor?

We have the answer in today's reading from Revelation. St. John envisions a day when this world will be no more. All the houses, stores, universities, hospitals, theaters - they will all vanish. At that moment, John says, "I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem come down out of heaven." That city,

unlike Monroe or Seattle or New York, will last forever.

I want to belong to that city and I want you with me. That's the greatest good I can wish for you: to belong to the new Jerusalem. Everything on earth pales in comparison to the new Jerusalem. The best image we have is the beauty of a bride. That's why St. John says the heavenly Jerusalem will be like "a bride adorned for her husband."

The physical beauty of the bride should to point to inner beauty. That's what all of us strive for by making our lives, our homes, our society beautiful. We do it here in the parish by keeping up our buildings and grounds. We want them to attract and inspire - so we can become beautiful inside, by God's grace.

Something similar applies as we join with other parishes in Western Washington - which is a good lead-in to the Annual Catholic Appeal and our parish renovation project. They are expressions of love: willing the good of the other that they will belong to the Church in heaven - the New Jerusalem. Amen.

*Quoted in the Catechism: "To love is to will the good of another." All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions "are evil if love is evil and good if it is good." (#1766)

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