

‘DO OUR PROCESSES & DECISIONS SEEM GOOD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT?’

6th Sunday of Easter – 26th May 2019

We can be tempted to label people.

We can be tempted to use derogatory terms.

We can be tempted to ignore the dignity of a human person and try to reduce that person to a label.

We can be tempted to promote our ego by reducing someone else’s dignity.

We can be tempted to think in terms of winners and losers.

It can happen across all levels of society.

[GOSPEL OF JOHN 14/23-29](#)

Let us begin our reflection by the very positive counsel of today’s Gospel.

Today’s Gospel passage invites us

- To love Jesus
- To keep the Word of Jesus
- To be open to the Father loving us
- To be open to God coming to us
and making God’s home in us.
- To receive the Holy Spirit sent to us
- To be taught by the Holy spirit, the Advocate
- To allow the Holy Spirit to remind us of what Jesus has said
- To receive the gift of peace from Jesus
- To not be afraid, and not let our hearts be troubled
- To rejoice with Jesus
- To believe

You are invited now to read the Gospel prayerfully.

‘Jesus answered him,

*‘Those who love me will keep my word,
and my Father will love them,
and we will come to them
and make our home with them.*

*Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;
and the word that you hear is not mine,
but is from the Father who sent me.*

I have said these things to you while I am still with you.

*But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything,
and remind you of all that I have said to you.*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled,
and do not let them be afraid.*

*You heard me say to you,
“I am going away, and I am coming to you.”
If you loved me,
you would rejoice that I am going to the Father,
because the Father is greater than I.*

*And now I have told you this before it occurs,
so that when it does occur, you may believe.’*

Let us take a moment to recall what counsel we have just received from Jesus.

[pause]

Now let us place before God silently,
an instance in our lives when we were tempted
to insult and denigrate and label another person
and instead, we responded by loving them as Jesus does,
and with the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

[pause]

WHAT WAS OUR PRAYER AS WE PONDERED HOW TO RESPOND TO THAT PERSON?

HOW DID THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP US?

[pause]

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 15:1-2, 22-29

Let us now turn to today’s First Reading.
Certain Jewish Christian individuals, without authority to do so, are burdening Gentile
Christians with so many Jewish religious customs.

Some leaders travel to Jerusalem to meet the Christian leadership and to show them how
God is at work in the lives of Gentile Christians.

Chapter 15 recounts this assembly.

Chapter 15 of Acts of the Apostles should always be relevant to church decision making.
It defies labelling. No one label can capture it.

IS IT RADICAL? IS IT CONSERVATIVE?

IS IT LIBERAL? IS IT REFORMIST?

IS IT A RENEWAL? IS IT TRADITIONAL?

The starting point in Christian decision-making begins with the Love and Mission of Jesus. And through a process of prayer and guidance by Holy Spirit, it should culminate, not in ourselves, but in the Love and Mission of Jesus.

Guided by Jesus in love, there is no place for putting unnecessary burdens on others and no place for insulting and denigrating and labelling others.

Paul and Barnabas and others drew on the Holy Spirit and travelled to Jerusalem to advocate for Gentile Christians. With energy and passion, they entered the debate. With love and hope, they pointed out to the gathered assembly in Jerusalem, many wonders that God was doing for Gentile Christians.

The final decision of the Assembly said:

'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials'

Whether it is the [Synod of Bishops for the Pan Amazon Region](#), in Rome 6-27 October 2019 or the [Plenary Council in Australia in 2020](#) or our [Brisbane Archdiocesan Plenary Assembly](#) in October this year or in a parish mission statement, or Archdiocesan agency policies, we need to draw on the Holy Spirit throughout the process.

And prayerfully ask the question –
DOES IT SEEM GOOD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Jerusalem Assembly decided on strategies for implementation, including a pastoral letter from the leaders, and the sending of two delegates, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas to meet with the Gentile Christians and to explain what it means.

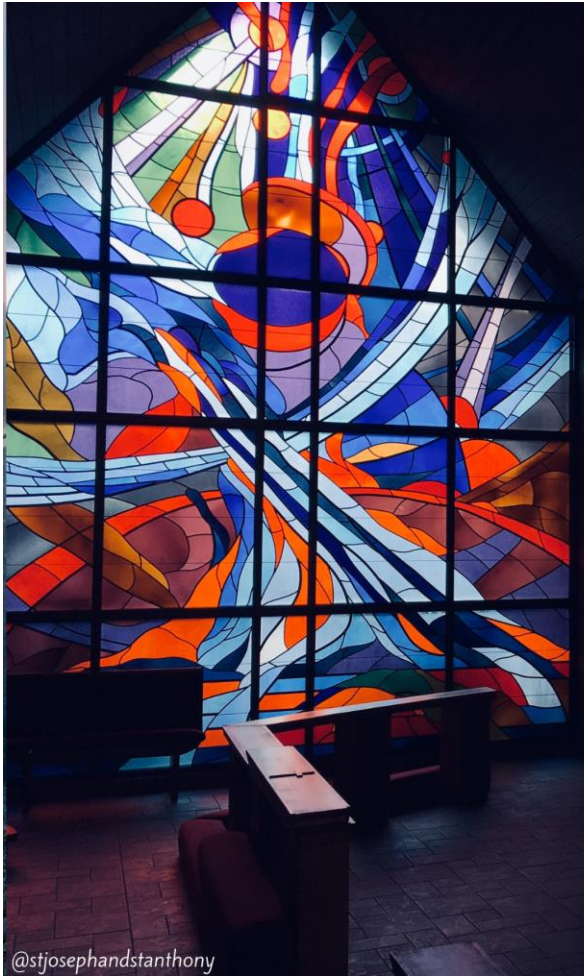
Let us now ask the Holy Spirit, the Advocate to lead us forth.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/052619.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook26052019>]



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Homily ~ Fr. Gerry Hefferan