

Saturday 4th Week of Easter May 13, 2017 St. Agnes Church

I have some visual aids this morning: 2 rocks.
One is angular. It has 5 or six separate flat facets....some sharp edges.
The other is rounded, smooth, spherical.
The shape of each rock reveals some of its history.
The round rock I pulled out of a stream in the Smokey Mountains.
It is rounded by its impact with other rocks as they are carried from the top of the mountain to the valley floor by the flow of the water.
The angular rock is new, so to speak...recently broken off of a larger rock.
The angular rock signifies birth. The smooth, rounded rock, old age.
Over time our rough edges are worn down. Hopefully we are becoming well-rounded.

We are the living stones which build up the Church of Jesus Christ.
This presents a problem of sorts. Have you ever tried to build with round rocks?
Bricks are square. They stack together easily. Rounded rocks do not.
Rounded rocks can be used to build something sturdy and strong
if and when mortar is used. The mortar binds the stones together and also fills in the gaps.

In the Church, Jesus Christ is the mortar that holds all us rounded stones together...
connects us to one another. He is our strength. He is our communion.

Let's take this one step further. Actual mortar stays on the outside of any rock it touches.
Jesus Christ is within each of us and is not just some spiritual connection between us.
In essence, the Church is the Jesus Christ in you connecting with and binding to
the Jesus Christ in me. It's not just something between us. It's something in us....like a magnetic force.

Jesus and the Father are one. They are unified.
And at the time of our salvation we will be somehow completely unified with them.
The purpose of Jesus Christ, Son of God come into this world, is to unify all of humanity in God.
And if that is his purpose it is also our purpose. If that is his mission it is also our mission.

As we pray, as we serve, as go about living our Christian life, it is our purpose and our task
to seek unity in Christ, to maintain our unity in Christ, and to strengthen our unity in Christ.

The signs of disunity are all around us: division, exclusion, hatred, violence and abuse,
injury and woundedness caused by harm, sin, contempt, jealousy, fear, dislike, rejection, isolation,
selfishness, disinterest and indifference, exclusiveness
(like when we say "my" union with Christ when in reality the Church is "our" union in Christ).

Our unity in Christ entails merging....just like traffic merging onto the expressway
where one joins the many: same speed, same direction, same destination....
looking out for each other....stopping to assist those in accidents or on the side of the road.

Here are some characteristics describing unity in Christ: animated by the spirit of Christ;
a common dedication to truth; a common vision of the dignity of the person;
embracing the same source of light—the person and message of Jesus Christ;
a spirit of freedom and charity; mutual respect; sincere dialogue; protection of the rights of individuals;
recognizing and advancing the wholeness of each member as a human person;
and according to one's role and capacity, contributing to the good of local community
and to the life and mission of the universal Church.

How often do we think about serving the unity of the Church?
How often do we realize how our sin contributes to the disunity of the Church?

Today's prayer: "O Lord, Your saving power is made manifest, is made present in the world, in and
through the Church established by Jesus Christ Your Son. You make Your salvation known through the
faithfulness of Your people. Help me to merge into and become part of what holds the Church together.
Amen!"