



*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that
all men are created equal*

July 5, 2020

Dear friends of God,

This weekend we celebrate the 4th of July. This was the day that the wording of the Declaration of Independence was approved and the document was published. It is an important day in our American experience when we usually celebrate with picnics, family, friends and fun. It is a good opportunity to come together in safe ways. It is important to remember our heritage and the revolutionary impulse that created our nation. As a human family, we need to embrace another revolutionary impulse that God has created in the human heart. That is a revolution of love.

Last week during my homily, I encouraged all of us to engage a question during the week when we faced a challenging moment: "What's the most loving thing I can do in this situation?" I think that this question is important for each of us and our world because we seem to have collectively forgotten how to love each other with the love that God calls us to with compassion, forgiveness and understanding. We need a revolution of love. We would all say that we want to love God, and for us as Christians that is tied to loving our neighbor. Jesus taught us in Matthew 22:37-39

You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The holy comforter of the afflicted and the afflicter of the comfortable, Dorothy Day, put it this way: "I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least." Jesus inaugurated a revolution of love for the whole human family. This is what Dorothy Day described as a revolution of the heart. "The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us." We seem to have become heartless as a nation and a world. Obviously, there are many bright spots that we have shown as Americans and as members of the human family. However, we need to seek the unity that comes through love and a revolution of the heart: as one Hindu prayer says, "Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill my heart, my world, my universe." We all have a part in creating this new world, a world of joy, peace and love. We need to take personal responsibility to make that happen. It even means journeying with those whom we call enemies. We need to strive to love those who preach hate and division to a new way of living.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr in one of his sermons spoke of the transforming power of love in this way:

Now there is a final reason I think that Jesus says, "Love your enemies." It is this: that love has within it a redemptive power. And there is a power there that eventually transforms individuals. Just keep being friendly to that person. Just keep loving them, and they can't stand it too long. Oh, they react in many ways in the beginning. They react with guilt feelings, and sometimes they'll hate you a little more at that transition period, but just keep loving them. And by the power of your love they will break down under the load. That's love, you see. It is redemptive, and this is why Jesus says love. There's something about love that builds up and is creative. There is something about hate that tears down and is destructive. So love your enemies.

We continue to see the destruction that hate brings about within our lives and our communities. The disease of hate is destroying the nation that we each love and the world that God has given to the human family as our common home. It is time to take the challenge of Jesus seriously to love God and to love our neighbor.

As we celebrate this 4th of July, let us take the opportunity to be enveloped by our God of Jesus Christ, our God of Radical Mercy who inspires us to a revolution of the heart that creates friends from enemies and calls forth a new creation that we call the Kingdom of God.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. Ken", followed by a horizontal line.