



September 6, 2020

Dear friends of God,

I hope not to be redundant, but I have decided to include last weekend's homily notes as part of my column for this weekend. Our partisan bickering is killing us as a nation. I believe that as Americans we know that we are capable of being better than the muck that we have created with our words and anger towards those who might think differently than we do. We need to call each other to our higher selves. We can do this, but we need to respond to our present situation with compassion for each other. It seems that we have forgotten to cultivate compassion for one another. To be compassionate is at the heart of the teaching of Jesus. Yet, we neglect this call to suffer with each other, and the role that we have in lessening the suffering of our neighbor whom Jesus commands us to love. As Catholics, we are capable of showing a path forward through love and compassion for each other, those with whom we disagree and with all of creation. We have difficult decisions to make in the coming months. We need to do so from a place of prayer in our own lives. Imagine if we took time every day to pray for both of the candidates running for president. Imagine if we prayed for those whom we disagree. Let us take these days before the election to listen to God to see what he desires for us as Americans and as members of our human family. Our time of daily prayer is an opportunity for us to be transformed into the Body of Christ who nourishes us in the Eucharist.

The last two weeks, the Democrats and Republicans had their national conventions to nominate their candidates for president. I watched a bit of both. There were opportunities, speeches and agendas. They each attacked the other side and could tell you why their candidate was the best for America. The political parties threw grenades of fear all around as if it were confetti.

Truthfully, both conventions made my stomach turn in different ways. It is an important reminder that neither party is a Catholic Party and both are deficient in many ways. God is not a Democrat nor a Republican. And we as Catholics need to see ourselves as Catholic Christians and everything else will fall aside.

I really want to stand up here today and say that we need to endorse the only person that as Catholics we can endorse: Jesus 2020. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) Jesus doesn't change his values based on polling numbers. Jesus doesn't try to get our vote through fear baiting. Jesus continually tells us "Take courage; do not be afraid." Do not be afraid! Jesus never tries to manipulate us or take advantage of our cares and concerns.

He simply wants to share his life with us. He desires that we have life and have it abundantly. And he wants us to take care of each other as one human family. For Christ there are no borders or boundaries. He simply sees us as his beloved children in the human family.

Jesus invites us to take up our cross and follow after him. He doesn't coerce or manipulate. Jesus simply offers us an invitation to love. He wants us to move from believers to lovers: lovers of God, neighbor and enemy.

The cross isn't a vehicle for fear but for transformation: our transformation into the body of Christ. There is no glitz or glamour and the cameras aren't rolling. Jesuit priest and peace activist Fr. Dan Berrigan asked the best question I have ever heard in relation to taking up the cross of Jesus: The question we need to ask ourselves if we want to follow Jesus is: 'Do we look good on wood?'

Please do not forget to note the weekend mass changes. We will continue with 4 p.m. mass on Saturday. The Sunday mass will be at 9 a.m. If we see that we have more people than we can accommodate within the parameters of 25 percent of our church capacity and honoring social distancing, we will add an 11 a.m. mass until we can hold more people in our church building.

It is difficult to believe that we are about to celebrate Labor Day. It seems like the month of March lasted an eternity but that Memorial Day was only a moment ago. Let us keep each other in prayer as our children begin school and we go back to some form of normal even though things are far different than they were a year ago. Please remember that no matter the time of year, whatever struggles or joys we experience, God is always in our midst.

Happy Labor Day! Much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Ken". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.