



"Have I loved well today or have I held onto anger?"

September 13, 2020

Dear friends of God,

It seems that in our present world we are being marinated in anger. It is affecting our lives, nation and world. Someone once suggested that anger is an ugly beast, and we are poking it with a stick. It is time to put our sticks down. Our first reading from Sirach reminds us that:

Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight.

The vengeful will suffer the LORD's vengeance,

for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbor's injustice;

then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.

Could anyone nourish anger against another

and expect healing from the LORD?

We need healing from the Lord. As Christians, we all want to be saved by God when our time on earth is done, but we forget that the word *salvation* comes from a Latin word for *healing*. God wants to heal us in the here and now and not simply "save" us when we die. Our earthy life is not meant to be a waiting room for Heaven. We are called by God to live our life of Resurrection in the present moment with our God of love who desires that we share love as if we were young lovers with hearts overcome with *eros*.

The question that we might want to ask ourselves every day is have I loved well today or have I held onto anger towards someone. Is my heart full of love, or is consumed with the poison of anger, or maybe somewhere in between?

"Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die." This quote has been attributed to many in our world. Some say it was spoken by the Buddha or another Buddhist

teacher, or the great South African healer and leader Nelson Mandela. I think that so many names being associated with this quote is a testament to its power and its necessity in a world seething with anger. We are drinking our own poison and it is destroying our health, our souls and our world. For the first time in generations, the expected American life span is decreasing primarily because of opioid addiction, alcohol abuse and suicide. Anger is traumatizing us. It is time for us to sincerely and vulnerably love both God and our neighbor. And we need to love ourselves as well: love ourselves into a new way of living and being. In a way by which we allow ourselves to be loved unconditionally by God and seek to share that love with all of those around us.

As Catholic Christians, we need to show a pattern of putting the stick down and stop poking at our anger. We also have to stop poking at the anger of others. We have to learn that to love God means that we need to learn to love our neighbor and we can never do that by inciting another's anger. People ought to see us as those people who love God and neighbor not solely with our lips (remember that talk is cheap), but we also need to love through our actions. There is a great challenge in this during our present crisis in the human family and within our national soul. When future generations look back, how will they see us? As loving men and woman seeking to do the will of the Lord or will they see us as selfish people who contributed to the atmosphere of fear and hatred? Trust me dear friends, we do not want to be on the wrong side of history on this one. Jesus has shown us the way, and we believe that he is the Way, and the Truth and the Life, we need to take Jesus and his call of love seriously.

Jesus taught us that the way of love is lived through forgiveness of others. Yet we fall into the trap of our society that is seething with anger. There is another way: Jesus Christ who is our peace and our forgiveness. We are being marinated in the love and forgiveness of our God of radical mercy. As Psalm 34 says: We need to "... taste and see the goodness of the Lord."

Much love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Ken".