



Our Lady of Africa

WE ARE ONE

Holy, Catholic & Apostolic
EST. July 4, 2021 - Chicago

Third Sunday of Easter

John 21:1-19

Dear Friends,

There are many beautiful elements to today's Gospel story, but I want to talk about reconciliation. Jesus gives us a powerful example of how we should forgive.

When Peter comes racing out of the water, Jesus is standing by the charcoal fire. It was a perfect opportunity to ask Peter if he remembered the last time, he was next to a charcoal fire. Perhaps he might mention the maid servant in case Peter was in total denial. I am sure most of us would and then go into very great detail of how much the betrayal hurt us.

Of course, Jesus is different. Jesus accepts Peter as he is. Jesus initiates the forgiveness. Jesus calls Peter to love. For Jesus that is sufficient.

There is a strong message for us. Reconciliation is never a fifty/fifty proposition where we measure out equal parts using a teaspoon to get the exact equality. For Jesus, forgiveness comes first without all the blaming, without the measurements down to the smallest detail. This mercy of God is like a torrential downpour of love and forgiveness. There is no minute measurement, only a call to love.

We say that this is impossible for us and, indeed, it is without the gift of God's grace. But with God's grace, look what happens. It takes a long time to know but the truth will eventually open our eyes and our heart. There is no life, and absolutely, no happiness in hatred. The grudge will never bring us peace.

Peter, a fragile and flawed human being, is transformed to a fearless leader of the Christian community. That incredible change was possible because Peter knew he was loved.

Just look at your life. Look at the relationships in your family, at work, in the parish, and in the community. You and I have the power to love and to transform the tension and the conflict that is always part of our life. We are called by the Risen Christ to put away the teaspoon of our petty and jealous approach to justice. Jesus invites to love without measure as we struggle to walk in his footsteps. We all could save ourselves and many of our loved ones a lot of pain if we followed the example of the God of the second chance that is revealed in today's Gospel.