

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (5/16-17/2009)

Acts 10/ 25-48, Psalm 98, 1 John 4/7-10, John 15/9-17

In his final discourse (*John 13-17*), Jesus speaks to his disciples: *“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain”*

Some people think those words are directed only towards people making a religious commitment, such as the nine men who will be ordained for Chicago next week..

In the first reading from the *Acts of the Apostles* today, Peter learns otherwise – and so should we in this 21st century.

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality; rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.”

Obviously, the Good News is for everyone.

The question remains however: How will the Good News get out to everyone?

In an age of globalization and instant communication, there are still millions who have never heard of Jesus. And millions more who could care less.

Indeed, in our own communities, there are many who have not heard the story or, if they have heard it, have put it on the far back burner.

It's an interesting image: God eagerly reaching out to everyone, and so many of us, for a variety of reasons, acting as if it isn't happening.

It may be that the second reading from *1 John* today offers a solution each of us can buy into: *“Let us love one another, because love is of God.”*

Our individual task in this monumental work of getting the Good News out comes down to a very simple strategy: Love one another.

If you or I do nothing but love one another as we go through life, we are fulfilling the role God has called us to.

Dom Helder Camara, a former archbishop in Recife, Brazil, once said: *“Watch how you live. Your lives may be the only gospel your sisters and brothers will ever read.”*

Mahatma Gandhi, the man who led the non-violent campaign for freedom for India, commented that he admired the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, but he was put off by the fact that most Christians he met never practiced them.

In that Sermon (*Matthew 5-8*), Jesus says we even have to love our enemies.

Did Gandhi love the British?

Did Dr. Martin Luther King love Sheriff Bull Connors, his deputies, and his vicious police dogs?

We are obviously not all called to perform heroic deeds for others.

Some of us – perhaps most of us – lead pretty ordinary lives.

But God needs ordinary people to handle the ordinary situations.

Your love, commonplace as it may be, is, according to Thomas Merton, *“the guarantee ... and the sign that the Holy Spirit is at work in the church and in the world.”*

There's work, much of it routine and undramatic, to be done in this world of ours.

And you and I are called by God to do it.

May we all be generous enough to answer with a resounding *“Yes!”*