

May 5, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Easter



Center for Spiritual Development

EVERYONE WHO LOVES KNOWS GOD

By Fr. David C. Robinson, SJ

From Today's First and Second Readings

Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

ACTS 10:34-35, 44-48

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is

Reflection

As the narrative of Acts unfolds, we witness the complex and frequently inspiring saga of the early community of disciples and the emerging family of the church in all its diversity and spiritual exploration. During the travels of Paul, Barnabas, and others, there are communities of Jews and Greeks who welcome them with receptive hearts, and others who imprison and stone them as blasphemers. Peter, recognized as the Apostle to the Jews, embarks on a visionary path in which he comes to understand God's divine intentions for all peoples, a reality that ranges far beyond the structures of the Law—dietary restrictions and circumcision mandates. The Spirit guides him to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea, where he enters a Gentile home and dines with the family. As he notes in today's reading, **"I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."** Moreover, the orthodox Jewish Christians who accompany him are astounded that the gift of the Spirit which they had received is now being poured out on the Gentile believers. The sharp religious demarcations between the two traditions are slowly dissolving in the new revelations of God's love for all peoples, symbolized in the grace of baptism. Paul enters into a similar journey of encounter, as he learns that the Pharisaic structures by which he had organized his life could no longer be the measure of his relationship to the God who had freed his soul through Jesus. This revelation leads him into a life of dialog with the diaspora Greeks, who become another cultural component of the growing Christian world.

As the communities search for the common reality and values that unite them, they come to recognize their foundation in the Great Commandment of Jewish Law. The first mandate is love of God with all one's mind, soul, heart, and strength. The second focuses on the love of neighbor. The First Letter of John articulates the mystical depth of a love that not only unites us to God, but makes us vessels of God's love to all: **Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son.** The miracle of God's love unites us to, and manifests itself in, the very foundation of creation and of our humanity. We do not simply 'know' love; love is our way of knowing. We know as God knows—through the eyes of

love.



Pieta

Photo by Fr. David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- What does it mean to you to say that “God is love?”
- How do you experience the “love of neighbor” in practical and concrete ways?
- What is the religious significance of the statement that “ **everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God?**”

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