

September 30, 2018

And Jesus said, "*For whoever is not against us is for us*"

*Church is being community with each other*

Church is being community with each other. I'd like to explore with you how this might relate to the situation we have in our Church today.

We've been considering for some time here how to respond to the pain and desolation that is widespread in our Church today. The first spontaneous response to this is often - "*We must change the Church.*" I'm not sure that "*changing the Church*" is the best place to start. Rather than attempting to "*fix*" the Church, wouldn't a better place to start be trying to "*build up*" the Church in the belief that this would lead to the healing we all long for.

Christ tells us we are community - all of us - and we are community when we act as a community - all of us, like celebrating together - crying together - laughing together - hurting together - mourning together and dancing together. This is what community looks like, this is what community does. Rather than fixing each other, community transforms each other. The experience of community morphs emotional desolation into spiritual consolation. Seeing Church as community/family in Christ offers the healing we all seek.

Of course, something needs to be changed in our present day church institutions and structures, but focusing on "*how to do this*" would likely just lead to differing opinions on "*how to do this*". Beginning from "*being community*" however allows for reform in the church while remaining in communion with each other all the while. Community is not about "*when*" we are together, Community is about "*how*" we are together.

Being with caring people was at the heart of my own rehab. last spring. My healing wasn't just about getting rid of my discomfort, the heart of my healing was in the loving relationships I experienced with my caregivers - in the midst of my discomfort.

I see this happening in our Celebrate Recovery program here on Wednesday evenings. It's not just about witnessing people recover from their hurts, habits and hang-ups, it's about the people coming together each week in support of each other - in the midst of their hurts - being community with and for each other.

When we don't have community, we become isolated, brittle and self-destructive. Sin is the breakdown of relationships and results in such narcissistic behaviors as [conceit](#), [self-absorption](#),

blaming and condemnation which simply compound the problems we already have. Acting out of such individualistic mind-sets is the cause of - and results in - the destruction of community, of being Church, regardless of which pew we sit in.

Last Sunday I described how I heard how villages in Zambia would come together to dance and feast for three days before sitting down to address their concerns. I hope they are still doing this today. I also described a Hawaiian practice called Ho'oponopano in which people would gather together around a sick person to ask for forgiveness for what they may have done to contribute to the hurt of an individual who was ill. How different it would had these people come together to blame and condemn each other, neither of which would have contributed to a healing, and in fact would have kept them from it.

Jesus on Calvary was in community with the people who were there, even offering to be so with those who were killing him: "*Fr. forgive...*" Being community in Christ with each other - in our disagreements and pain - allows us to hear, "*This day...*" This is being Church - warts and all - in good times and in bad - which God will never part. Community is not for something else, community is for itself - people coming together to be together. The gift of community is community.

This is Golden Star Mother's Day weekend. If we want to know what community looks like, watch the mother. She gives of herself when she celebrates with us - cries with us - laughs with us - hurts with us - mourns with us and dances with us.

Our Church will become a healed, forgiven community when we share in the sufferings and forgiveness of each other. As Jesus said, "*Whoever is not against us is for us.*" This is where you and I come in.

. . . What did you just hear?