

## 5th Sunday of Easter 2017

**Seven men filled with spirit and wisdom were selected by the disciples whose task would be to see that the widows were being cared for in the daily distribution.**

*Love will win, it is stronger than Death*

Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr offers the following comment. “If the blank white banner that the Risen Christ usually holds in Christian art should say anything, it should say: ‘Love will win!’ Love is all that remains. Love and life are finally the same thing, and we know that for ourselves once we have walked through death. Love has us; love *is* us, and our need for love recognizes love all around us. We already are what we are seeking.”

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Evangelical Minister, Jim Wallis writes this in his magazine, *Sojourners*, May 11, 2017: “Many have confided in me how overwhelmed they feel in responding to the things happening in our country that are frightening, completely disconcerting, threatening to the most vulnerable, morally incomprehensible, as well as a direct assault on so many things we as people of faith believe in.

“The vulnerable are presenting deep challenges to those who say they follow Jesus including: pastors, community immigration activists, politicians fighting for police reform, artists supporting religious liberty for our Muslim sisters and brothers, entrepreneurs creating jobs with a living wage, lawyers fighting for civil rights and voting protections, philanthropists supporting new social movements to protect the most vulnerable in our society.”

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Pope Francis made this observation when visiting recently-detainees at CeReSo 3 Penitentiary in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico: "Each one knows what he wants to say to the Lord; each person knows what he wants to be forgiven for. But I ask you, in this silent prayer, let us open our hearts to be able to forgive the society that has not been able to help us and that has often led us to err. From the depths of our hearts, may each one of us ask God to help us believe in his mercy."

In his recent visit to Portugal, Pope Francis said: "The Church shines forth when she is missionary, welcoming, free, faithful, poor in means and rich in love. Great injustice is done to God's grace whenever we say that sins are punished by his judgment, without first saying, as the Gospel does, that they are forgiven by his mercy!"

I saw this lived out Friday night at the South Fork Prison Camp 28 miles east of Tillamook. Some of us along with some men from the Nazarene Church go to the camp teach Friday night to lead a Christian AA program to help the men there into recovery from their addictions, primarily substance abuse. We began the evening as we always do with some music played by some of the brothers there - not my kind of music, but they're into it.

Anyway, at the end of the meetings, we circle up and - talk, the favorite time of the evening for me. One of the men, perhaps in his early twenties, was sitting down the line, head down, saying nothing till at one point he simply said, "*I am hurting.*" He looked so sad. You could tell he felt this chunk of his young life was simply being lost. The other men began saying how much more meaningful their lives had become once they got into recovery - not because they got away from their addictions, but because of their recovery "through" them. They were adamant how much they had grown, not in spite of but because of their struggles. The young man began to straighten up and talk, and by the time we left, he was smiling with this light in his eyes. I went over to him and told him I wanted to give him a big embrazzo - I don't even know if there is such a word - and he said, "*Thanks for coming. Have a safe drive home.*" I knew at that moment why I had come. He found hope, he found life. He is learning that:

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Today is Mother's Day, and to which mother do we look first? Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Why? Because at our beginnings, our mothers say: "*My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed.*"

Why? Because during our middle years when our wines run out, our mothers run to Jesus and say, "*They have no wine*"

Why? Because at our endings, it is our mothers who: "*Stand by the Cross of Jesus*" - and at ours!

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Face painting and pray: "*Hail Mary! Full of Grace . . .*"