

**July 5, 2015**  
**14th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith**

*I wonder how Jesus would view our faith today - out of Frustration or Faith. That would have depended on his "Level of his Identity." This is true for all of us. Whether we act out of faith or frustration depends on the "Level of our Identity."*

**Three Levels of Identity**

There are three Levels of Identity: *Boundaries - Prophetic - Wisdom*. The first level is about "*Boundaries*" - deciphering who we are. It's about self-identity, "who's in / who's out," as we see in conflicts between Conservatives and Liberals, Democrats and Republicans, even between Catholics and non-Catholics. This level is easily characterized by frustration.

The second Level of Identity is the "*Prophetic*" - trying to make matters way they should be, helping others. Ghandi and King are prime examples of the Prophetic. I would include the work of parents as Prophetic. They are always trying to make things better for their children. This level is characterized by both frustration and faith.

The third Level of Identity is "*Wisdom*" - experiencing God as infusing all things, living and moving through all things. This level shares in the joy of a deeper, broader, more inclusive way of loving. As St. Paul, says, "*Nothing can separate us from love of God.*" This level is characterized by faith.

**Examples of Each**

An example of life defined by "*Boundaries*" was an address delivered by John Paul II to Mrs. Corinne Clairborne Boggs, the new ambassador of the US to the Holy See, 12/16/97:

*"The erosion of community life that accompanies this era of greed, materialism, and excessive individualism ranks among the most imminent threats to our national well-being. In fact, one Zogby poll found that "greed and materialism" topped a list most urgent moral crisis in the US. Lost retirement savings due to recent corporate accounting scandals, dissolution of family life under the weight of overworked and underpaid parents, and growing fears about the long-term effects of global climate change are reminders that individual decisions can have painful and far-reaching consequences."* Life defined by boundaries is living at the level of gangs, whether community, church or nation. Complacency is very strong at this level.

An example of life defined as “*Prophetic*” is the interview of the new San Diego bishop, Bishop Robert McElroy, in the National Catholic Reporter, June 27, 2015, in which he speaks of “a church that banishes judgmentalism”:

*“Many U.S. Catholics want the church to “banish judgmentalism” of people in its ministries and to focus instead on getting close to them and understanding the struggles they face in their lives,” the new bishop of San Diego said. In an almost hourlong interview with NCR, Bishop Robert McElroy said while people want to be challenged by Gospel teachings, they are looking for a church that has ‘a sense of accepting people where they are and helping them to come farther. People want standards; people want the challenge of the Gospel,’ said McElroy, who was installed as the new leader of the San Diego church in April. ‘They don’t want it diluted, but they are so grateful that it is encased with Pope Francis in a very clear message that people aren’t expected to be perfect,’ he continued. ‘They’re called to do the best they can in the circumstances in which they find themselves -- which are often very, very challenging in people’s lives.’”* Life defined as “*Prophetic*” is about making matters the way they should be. Complacency at this level is weakened.

An example of a life defined by “*Wisdom*” can be seen in the article by evangelical minister, Jim Wallis, in Sojourners Magazine, June 26, 2015, entitled, “*Charleston is Testing the Soul of America*”:

*“On the day that Dylann Roof appeared in court and opened his mouth for the first time, family members of the people killed were there. Although there was no plan beforehand, some of them decided to speak directly to Roof. Nadine Collier startled the courtroom when [she said to Roof](#), “I forgive you and have mercy on your soul.” Her mother, Ethel Lance, had been one of the shooter’s victims. Alana Simmons, whose grandfather had been killed, then [stood up and said](#), “We are here to combat hate-filled actions with love-filled actions ... And that is what we want to get out to the world.” Despite their anger and pain, others offered forgiveness to the young white supremacist. The anguish, grace, and forgiveness of one family member after another stunned the world. Those families are not just victims now. They have set the tone for the national conversation on race that we now need to have. They want and will require justice, but are also offering forgiveness. They are telling the country that love is stronger than hate, and that love must attack hate. We must fight what is so wrong, but without being wrong ourselves. It’s time for white Christians to be more Christian than white — only that will make racial reconciliation possible. That’s what the country and, more importantly, what God is now waiting for.”* Life described as one of “*Wisdom*” reflects a deeper, broader, more inclusive way of loving. There is no complacency at this level.

## Consequences

There are consequences to each level of life. “*Boundaries*” ultimately leads to fighting; the “*Prophetic*” reaches out to help others; “*Wisdom*” draws into union with all things. I wonder how Jesus, if he were standing among us here today, would view our faith?

## Independence Day

Today we are celebrating Independence. It is time to celebrate America’s gifts, for they are many. It is also time to address America’s problems, and they are many. Whether we respond to them on the Level of “*Boundaries*,” or the Level of the “*Prophetic*,” or the Level of “*Wisdom*” profoundly affects the quality of our lives - our church - and our country. This is a greeting, this is a challenge, this is a prayer:

*Happy Independence Day, Everyone!*