

May 15, 2022
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Bulletin Reflection
Fr. Ed Smith

Acts 14: 21-27; Revelation 21:1-5a; John 13: 31-33a, 34-35

Every morning I wake up to the news on the radio, and some mornings I wish I had not done so. Too often, we only have to listen to the news for a moment to understand that the world we live in has more than its share of division, violence and brutality. It seems that senseless attacks occur daily, and innocent people are victims of hatred and terrorism. What are we to do as Christians when faced with such ugliness? Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us, which means, among other things, that we forgive those who have hurt us. On the other hand, it is not particularly a Christian virtue to pretend that there is not evil in our world and try to forget that we have the call to fight for the protection of the children of God, young and old alike. How do we reconcile these two realities: forgiveness and fighting? We do this by following the example of Jesus Himself, who not only spoke of love, but put it into practice; who protected those who were persecuted by others; who stood up for the dignity of those who were most vulnerable in society; who showed us that love involves action and commitment that give meaning to our lives. At the same time, He did not hate those who were the causes of so much pain and suffering; He forgave them and tried to bring them to conversion of heart. This path is not easy to follow, especially when we are faced with destructive forces that cause so much fear and suspicion. On the other hand, the teaching of Jesus is very clear: it is love that will prevail. And it is love that will give us peace in a world of anger and division. It is not an indication of weakness to love and forgive those who hate us. Rather, it shows our Christian faith at its strongest, enabling us to endure suffering, to trust in God's care in difficult times, to forgive those who hate us, and to know that Jesus is with us bringing forth healing, hope and peace.