

April 28, 2024

Celebration of Chapter 2024

Reflection

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Acts 9:26-31

John 1st letter 3:18-24

John15:1-8

Today, the fifth Sunday of Easter. . . a Sunday with war raging in many parts of the world, the planet in crisis and our nation divided by words of hate. This Sunday is also a Sunday when we celebrate the work of 90 IHMs who, representing the entire IHM community, spent almost seven days together, sifting and sorting, looking at roots and relationships, challenging each other to find what our collective hearts recognize and most desire at this time in our ever-evolving universe. We joined the fire of Louie and Theresa and asked each other, “how then shall we live? To what do we commit?”

The scriptures this Sunday of the Easter season tell us of a time of peace in the early Christian community and how the disciples reacted to Saul, the new guy who comes to Jerusalem, the new guy, who recently converted from a persecutor to disciple, who when they see he is willing to give his life for the Gospel, they embrace him, rescue him from danger and send him to a place where his gifts will be used.

And in the gospel passage the evangelist has Jesus giving voice to **I Am** language. . . language that has resonance with revelatory statements in the OT and language that has been ascribed to Jesus in multiple instances.

I am the bread of life, **I am** the light of the world, **I am** the shepherd, **I am** the resurrection, **I am** the way, **I am** the true vine. On the banks of Lake Erie, we challenged each other about our own lives. **I am** In that challenging became clear that we are discovering anew the **I AM.... of IHM.**

Matthew Fox in his book *The Cosmic Christ* says that **I AM** consciousness affects our attitude toward time in that the past and future are not what exist. It is the now moment that exists. It is the divine now that is all ours. And so we ARE at another new moment.

A time when we recognize that:

the vine of IHM has had multiple pruning's **and** we know the fruit of those pruning's, we revisit again and again our deep roots using the words and example of Justina Riley, Theresa McGivney and Margaret Brennan who encouraged us to take the risk, dare and

dream. We entrusted a new generation of IHMs formed long after Vatican II, not known to many in the same way as those who have been in community for 60 or 70+ years.

We recognize that

What holds us all is our dedication to the liberating mission and our love for each other, a love as John says that is not about words but is about truth and deeds.

As I reflected on these scriptures I remembered a homily I heard by Ellen Rufft, CDP, a sister of Divine Providence and a psychologist, who referred to a book by Gary Chapman called ***The Five Love Languages***. Languages universally understood whatever our native language.

The five languages are the language of a **generous caring touch**,

When we give each other the pat on the back, embrace, handhold or some other undemanding spontaneous show of affection.

The language of **quality time**, when we take time to attentively listen to each other's joys and woes and yes even each other's ramblings and repeated stories.

The language of **affirmation**, when we complement each other directly in person and when we speak appreciatively about each other in our absences.

The language of **service**, when we do little kindnesses for each other helping with computer issues, bringing someone their hearing aids or their walker or as **sister servants engage in those ministries where we are most needed**.

The language of **gift giving**, ordering gorgeous flowers for the chapel, or the gift of icons, or like Monica Tylinski's husband, who lines up her birthday gifts in the living room to build suspense (all husbands in attendance take note). Or the gifting each other with poetry in the form of a direction statement or writing fun words to a familiar anthem.

So today at this new moment with 5 languages of love we celebrate our risking, daring, dreaming, and showing our love for each other with more than words to express the reality of how we envision our life together on planet earth. Right now, we have elected four women who represent the new nun's life. . . who challenge existing structures which allow women and children to be trafficked and undervalued. . . who understand the oppression of white colonization from their lived experience and who have been through the crucible of illness and perhaps bring to all of us a new creativity and view for total community involvement in creating a new Christian community of peace and **SO** we say to them and each other let us love each other In truth and indeed in a world that is filled with the

language of hate, division and untruth we are the branches, the kin of all who came before us, all in this Chapel today and all of our friends and relations across the globe.

Sung Affirmation

All who came before us

Brought us to this moment

Standing on the threshold

Of a brand new day!