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*Deacon Klaus Fricke*



*St. Michael the Archangel*

*6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Year A (May 17, 2020)*

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The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Most of us are walking right down the middle of that road. We have good intentions about many good things we are going to do. We intend to give up habits that are destructive in our lives. We intend to spend more time learning how to pray and to meditate effectively. We intend to be more loving, more sensitive, more compassionate, more present to other people. We intend to do more about people who are hurting. We intend to reexamine our values and our priorities and our whole way of life. But we are awfully busy. We have so many other things on our minds that we do not have time to follow through on our good intentions. This very human tendency must have been very much on the mind of Jesus.

Again, and again He made the point: accepting His teachings was not enough; they had to be applied; they had to be translated into real live action. In a hundred different ways He exhorted His disciples to do it, to get at it. Oh, how He prodded them! Enter through the narrow gate, He told them. That was a call to action! Build your house on rock, He told them. That was a call to action! Be like the good healthy tree that bears fruit. That was a call to action! It is not enough to stand around saying, "Lord, Lord," He told them. The important thing is that you do the Will of My Father. That was a call to action!

The Good News about God is that He loves you and wants you to have life. But He has given you freedom-freedom to say "Yes" or "No." You can choose life, or you can choose death. You can obey or you can disobey. You can follow Jesus, or you can go your own way. That is what Jesus is saying in today's Gospel: "He who obeys the commandments he has received from Me is the man who loves Me." The consequence or the fruit of freely choosing to say "Yes!" to God is love. Obeying God is learning how to love. Do not talk about it. Forget your good intentions. They are of no account. Stop picking and choosing and making excuses to yourself and others. Get on with it! Do it! "Do God's Will as I have revealed it to you," Jesus is telling us. But he does not leave us hanging there. He gives us help. He holds up before us the joy of holy obedience. If you take the narrow gate, the disciplined way of obedience you will find wholeness of life. You will become the tree that bears rich fruit. Your life's house will be built on a solid foundation that will withstand any storm.

Do you remember Leo Tolstoy's beautiful story entitled, "Where Love is, God is Too?" It is the story of an old shoe cobbler who hears a voice in his deep sleep one night. The voice tells him that on the very next day the Lord Jesus will visit him. Next morning, he begins his work in a spirit of high expectation as he eagerly awaits the coming of the Lord. But the only visitors he has that day are people in distress. First, there is an emaciated old beggar with a racking tubercular cough. The old cobbler took him in, warmed him by the fire and gave him food. Next came a half-frozen, thinly clad woman carrying her hungry baby in her arms. She needed food and clothing and the old cobbler obliged. Then, an elderly woman who sold apples at the town market came. She was terribly upset because a boy tried to steal her apples. The cobbler knew the boy and he brought the two together and reconciled them. That day did not turn out as he expected, but the cobbler did not forget the promise of the Lord's visit. Tired then, he fell asleep in his chair and he heard the same voice from the previous night, saying, "I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was sick and you ministered to Me."

There is only one way we can show our love for the Lord and that is by loving others. Opportunities are plentiful on every side to tell the Lord of our love. We do not need to talk about it; It is better if we do not. The real test of Love is not what we feel or what we say, but what we do. Love is an action, a way of living wherever we are. You can speak of your love for the poor, but unless you are willing to spend some time, talent, or treasure to help someone to escape from poverty, your words mean nothing. Do not just tell the Lord you love him. **Show Him!**