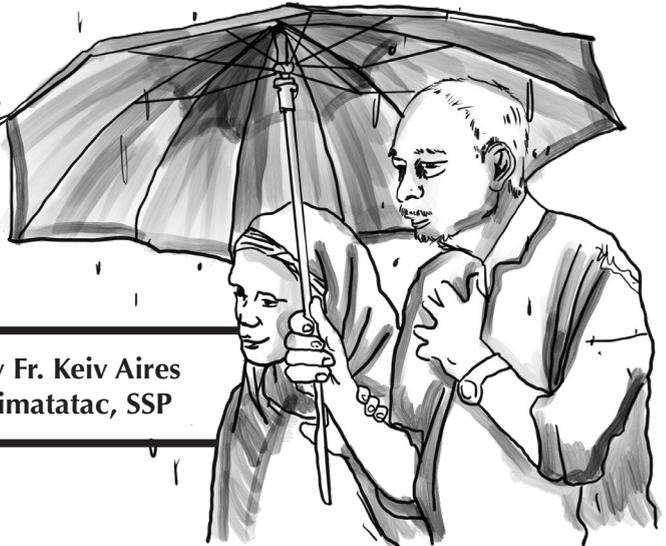




Self-giving Love



by Fr. Keiv Aires Dimatatac, SSP

Love transforms us in ways beyond our imagination. Though at times painful, to love always means both to receive and to manifest grace. In Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, the fox that the little prince had tamed became no longer any other fox but the fox he tamed. Anyone becomes someone whenever one loves. He/she automatically becomes the beloved and a lover. A brand new identity dawns, for ourselves and the other, when we love. In loving, one is "running the risk of crying a bit if one allows oneself to be tamed."

We witness in the First Reading how Cornelius' household, a pagan community, became a community of believers. Love transcends all barriers, borders, and biases. It transformed a non-believing community into Christ-followers. For the Jews, however, it is scandalous that God now extends his Love to the Gentiles. It is unthinkable that the unclean, the unloved outsiders, have been included in Yahweh's fold. For

they now have the opportunity to respond to God's call to Love in the person of Jesus. In Second Reading, St. John emphasizes that through the love of God, we are now deemed children of God.

To love, sisters and brothers, is not easy. If it were, Jesus would not have reminded and commanded us so many times to love and remain in it. Loving is a call towards self-giving even to the point of self-emptying. It is the laying of one's life for the beloved. It is expressed through faithfulness, through actions and words, through mutual sharing of graces, histories, fears, and material goods. But to stay in love, however, elevates us as we face greater challenges. Former Jesuit Superior General Fr. Pedro Arrupe reminds us to "Fall in love,

stay in love, and it will decide everything." When we Love, we manifest the person of Christ and thus invite the other to manifest the same Love we shared. Love is always radical.

Indeed, when we remain in God's Love, we allow ourselves to be transformed by it. We let love rule and guide our being. In love, we no longer become servants but friends towards one another, with God as our Father.

Easter is not just an annual passing season but an invitation to grow and be transformed by our Easter experience, by the triumph of that Someone who loves us so much. May our lives become an opportunity for others to become an Easter blessing to other people as well.

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF *MISSIO AD GENTES*

Continuing Missionary Renewal

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

A major local Church milestone was achieved in the 1991 month-long Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II). After three years of intense preparation, a total of 504 participants (including 165 lay faithful) gathered for a comprehensive review and renewal of Christian life in the light of the vision of Vatican II. The Council boldly challenged the local Church to be "a Community of Disciples, a Church of the Poor, committed to the mission of renewed integral evangelization, toward building up of a new civilization of life and love in this land."

Ten years later (January 2001) 369 delegates gathered

for the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR) and reflected on "how far we as a Church have fulfilled the grand vision and mission proposed by PCP-II...." While admitting weaknesses, they noted: "We rejoice, however, in the perseverance and increase of many movements of renewal; ... we hear anew God's call to renewal."

NPCCR committed the Church to nine focused pastoral priorities; they center on: faith formation, laity, poor, family, community-building, clergy renewal, youth, ecumenism-dialogue, and *ad gentes* mission. These nine priorities became the basis for a nine-year "novena" of renewal as the local Church prepared to celebrate the fifth centenary of evangelization of the Philippines (1521-2021). Thus, each year from 2013-2021 is dedicated to catechesis and reflection on a particular theme.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Is 48:20)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the earth: The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All — **And with your spirit.**

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P — The Gospel today, the last Sunday before Ascension, is part of Jesus' farewell discourse. Jesus tells his disciples to get out of their isolation, go forth, and bear fruit. In this Eucharist, we celebrate the mystery of Christ's love. Because God has loved us first and has sent his Son, may we remain in that love, and love others in return.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All—**For we have sinned against you.**

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All—**And grant us your salvation.**

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — **Amen.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

P — Christ, have mercy.

All — **Christ, have mercy.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you

thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Grant, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy, which we keep in honor of the risen Lord, and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All — **Amen.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48)

(Sit)

The descent of the Holy Spirit on the pagan Cornelius and his family reveals to Peter that God's love embraces even the Gentiles. True faith in God challenges us to go beyond our blood ties and narrow convictions and reach out to others.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

WHEN PETER entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being."

Then Peter proceeded to

speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

— The word of the Lord.

All — **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 98)

R — **The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power, (or Alleluia.)**

A. Tuazon

D A
The Lord has re - vealed to

3 G Em
the na - tions his sa - ving

6 A D
po - wer.

1. Sing to the LORD a new song,/ for he has done wondrous deeds;/ his right hand has won victory for him,/ his holy arm. (R)

2. The LORD has made his salvation known:/ in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice./ He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness/ toward the house of Israel. (R)

3. All the ends of the earth have seen/ the salvation by our God./ Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;/ break into song; sing praise. (R)

Second Reading (1 Jn 4:7–10)

Christian love conquers selfishness, hatred, and prejudice because that love flows not from the human heart alone, but from the heart of God who has first loved us.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

BELOVED, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Jn 14:23) (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him and we will come to him. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 15:9–17)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS SAID to his disciples: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that

my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.”

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

(Instead of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially during Lent and Easter Time, the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles’ Creed, may be used.)

All — I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us pray to the Father that we may live the love we profess and celebrate, so that we may be known as the disciples of Christ and that his joy may be ours. Let us humbly call upon him, saying:

R — Lord, listen to our prayer.

C — For Church and civil authorities: may the Lord fill them with a strong and unselfish love, that they may pursue justice and peace for all. We pray: (R)

C — For the members of the family and community who are at odds with each other: may they learn to forgive, understand, and reconcile with one another. We pray: (R)

C — For those who suffer pain, illness, or disease: may the Lord restore their health and turn the anxiety of their families into joy. We pray: (R)

C — For our beloved dead: may they delight in the joy of the heavenly kingdom, in the company of angels and saints. We pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: (R)

P — Lord God, Jesus your Son commanded us to love one another and showed us a marvelous example in his own life. May we grow in love so that we may be worthy of being called your children.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — May our prayers rise up to you, O Lord, together with the sacrificial offerings, so that, purified by your graciousness, we may be conformed to the mysteries of your mighty love.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface V of Easter

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfillment in the reality of the Cross and, by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.



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Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(Jn 14:15-16)

If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord, and I will ask the Father and he will send you another Paraclete, to abide with you for ever, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*
Almighty ever-living God, who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ, increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May God, who by the Resurrection of his Only Begotten Son was pleased to confer on you the gift of redemption and of adoption, give you gladness by his blessing.

All — Amen.

P — May he, by whose redeeming work you have received the gift of everlasting freedom, make you heirs to an eternal inheritance.

All — Amen.

P — And may you, who have already risen with Christ in Baptism through faith, by living in a right manner on this earth, be united with him in the homeland of heaven.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All — Thanks be to God.