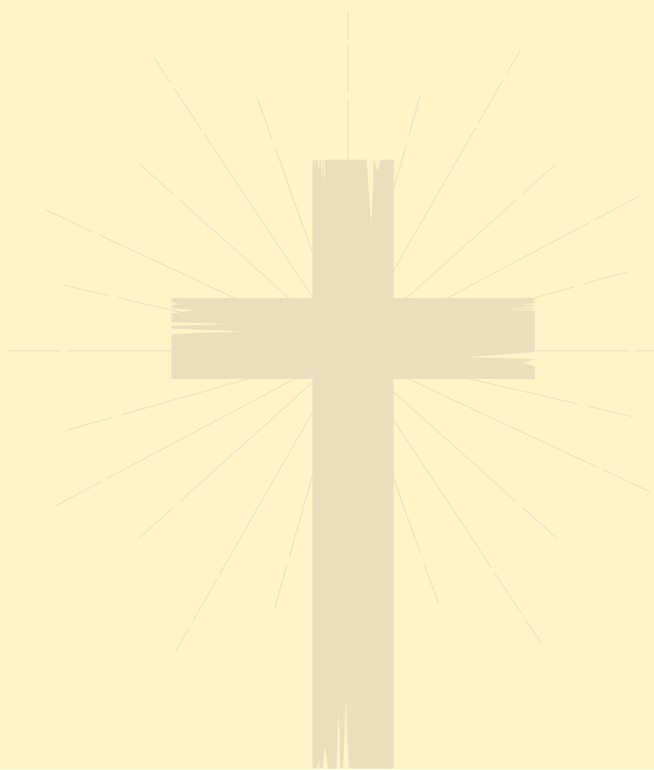


5TH SUNDAY OF LENT, 3 APRIL 2022

Religion for Love or Cruelty?



Message of *Laudato Si'*

Moreover, when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one. It follows that our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people. Every act of cruelty towards any creature is "contrary to human dignity". We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality: "Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism". Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

Laudato Si' #92

Take time to consider the heart of religion, and in this case, the heart of being a Catholic. It could be that there is an overemphasis on looking at religion as an institution that we lost sight of what it is all about. Being a Christian means to believe and embrace God. It is a way of life built on love, where we flourish and grow as God's children.

GOSPEL – JOHN 8:1-11

'Let the one among you who has not sinned be the first to throw a stone'

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and do not sin any more.'

REFLECTION

1 John 4:7-8 may hold one of the most important passages in the bible for our Christian life. John beautifully tells us, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know

God; for God is love." Mother Theresa is said to have shared, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love."

The religious leaders were not concerned about the law of God, its meaning, and its purpose. They do not appear to be guided by the question, "what is the most loving thing they can do for this woman?" They just wanted to trap Jesus, and they used the woman they caught to do it. In their way, the religious leaders used religion as a weapon to attack Jesus and as justification to stone the woman to death.

This week, let us ask ourselves what living a life as one who has accepted Jesus means for us. Then let us consider this in relation to some attitudes that we may have in our relationships with others.

LENTEN EXERCISE

This week, let us consider attitudes of cruelty. There may be a possibility that our following Jesus translate to a: "I am better than you" attitude. Is that the purpose and meaning of following Jesus? The questions we can ask ourselves this week are: Have we used our faith and belief as a weapon to attack others? Meaning, have we used prayer to insult or point out the faults of others? Have we shamed others because we do not see them pray or spend time in Church? Have we used prayer as part of our unresolved arguments and unresolved feeling?

MY STAND

- I will stop using God and my faith to put others to shame, make them fearful or guilty.
- I will witness to a God of love and mercy by my way of life (as Mother Theresa did).
- I will not be cruel to animals.

CONCRETE ACTION

Who do (we/ I) pray for? Do we pray for our parents, loved ones, country, those who have died, the sick, the suffering, the migrants, our leaders, and the world that God will embrace them in God's love, or are they only deserving of our "criticisms?"



**MALACCA
JOHORE
DIOCESE**

www.mjdiocese.my
f mjdiocese
@ malaccajohorediocese
caritasmjd.mjdiocese.my
creationjustice.mjdiocese.my



MJD
50
2022

www.lenten.mjdiocese.my
f MJDLenten