

May 10, 2015 – 6th Sunday of Easter  
*Love one Another as I Love You*

Happy Mother's Day to all our Moms!

Thanks for all you have done and continue to do!

***Why Doubt? He Lives!*** I hope your Easter Season has been blessed.

Have you ever been told to "Just connect the dots"?

It sort of implies that the evidence is quite clear.

Let's do an exercise right now. (See "connect the dots" attachment.)

Here's one dot on the board.

Here's another one.

That's simple ... we just connect the first and second dots.

Here's a third dot.

We continue our line to the next dot.

Here's a fourth dot.

I guess we should make a big diamond out of it.

Here's a 5<sup>th</sup> dot - right here in the middle.

Now what do we do?

Oh, maybe we should connect all the other dots to the 5<sup>th</sup> dot.

Actually, I'm a Christian and it was obvious to me that I really intended to make the form of the cross!

And you, in turn say, "No fair! You did not give us all the information at the start of the game"

Well, life is a little like that, isn't it?

We seldom get all the data before we start forming a conclusion.

We jump to a conclusion without all the data, without a full understanding.

There is a term for all this: ***prejudice!***

**Prejudice** simply means to make a quick judgment without taking the time to getting supporting information.

I would like to connect three sacred dots from our Scriptures today.

In Acts: **"God shows no partiality"**

In the Epistle from John: **"God is love"**

In today's Gospel: **"Love one another as I love you."**

"Love" is clearly the connection.

Let's return to the diagram and look how that plays out in our lives.

Let's change the five dots to ones with letters on them.

Let me show some ways we make quick judgments, ways that we are **prejudiced**.

Let's start right in the middle with the letter "A".

A is for AGE.

"He's only a kid. What would he know?"

"He's an old goat. He probably doesn't even have a smart phone."

What can you add to those about age?

We can laugh a little about them ... they are not so painful.

Here we have at the bottom the letter "S".

S is for SIZE and SHAPE.

This gets a little more personal and often hurtful.

Some people may be judged as too tall or too short, too skinny or too fat.

That gets personal to me when I see my fat belly in the mirror!

... and I can see my deformed neck and my bent shoulders.

We have lots of words, lots of hurtful words that we use when it comes to SIZE and SHAPE.

G is for GENDER.

We have probably all heard things like:

"Just like a man ... he doesn't have a clue."

"Just like a girl ... all she cares about is the color of her nail polish."

C is for COLOR.

We only need to look at the latest news items of protests and marches in Ferguson, Baltimore and Detroit!

E is for ETHNICITY/NATIONALITY/TRIBAL GROUP.

I lumped all three of those together.

They are often related to COLOR but they are yet another way to pre-judge people.

I grew up on the south side of Chicago and it was ripe with this kind of ethnic/nationality *prejudice*.

We had names (and not nice ones!) for just about everyone.

- Lithuanians were called "Lugans".
- Italians were called "Dagos" or "Wops".
- Polish were called "Polacks".
- Germans were called "Krauts"
- Jewish were called "Kikes".

{It seems like this has decreased with generations of intermarriage.}

There is hope for us, however.

There are incidents in our lives that can change our *prejudices*.

I can remember an incident about 45 years ago.

I worked in a plant of about 300 people.

We mostly worked in our own departments and did not see a lot of the other people except at lunch time in the cafeteria.

One woman caught my attention ... mostly because she was unattractive.

I don't recall my exact thoughts but they were along the line of "loser".

Our plant had a company Christmas party including an employee choir singing Christmas carols.

You guessed it!

That same woman had the voice of an angel as she sang a solo.  
I hope you have had some similar experiences to help you convert from  
your temptations to be ***prejudiced!***

When we put these five letters together they form a terrible word,  
"CAGES"!

How interesting!

When we jump to a conclusion about a person based on their Color, Age,  
Gender, Ethnicity, and Size/Shape, we are really putting that person  
in a cage, an imaginary cage,  
... we may even be locking them in that cage  
... a cage that we don't open because we don't want to get to know  
that person and get to know what they are really like.

But, our Scripture readings today are even more demanding than  
removing our cages!

Even if we don't - get to know more about that person,

Even if we don't - engage in conversation with them,

Even if we don't - have a meal with them,

Even if we don't - work side by side with them,

Jesus still says "Love one another."

When someone comes into our lives, Jesus tells us that our first  
response [our ***non-prejudice***] is to "Love one another."

Coming back to our dot-to-dot diagram, the connections between the  
dots is "Love". (See "cages" attachment.)

Let's build "love" not "cages"!

Now, are we ready to listen to the command of Jesus?

Are we ready to love one another?

***Why Doubt? He Lives!***