

Welcome

Fifty years after Vatican Council II, the words of *Gaudium et Spes* still echo powerfully and clearly: “Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history marked by profound and rapid changes that are spreading by degrees around the whole world. [...] And although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one person depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn

into opposing camps by conflicting forces. In fact, political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue bitterly” (GS 4).

Today, our interpersonal relations are often characterized by distrust and fear. “Diverse” and “different” are words used more and more frequently to indicate our distrust and sometimes even our disdain for our neighbor. If on the one hand today’s culture gives prominence to the positive value of personal freedom, on the other hand we are witnessing a decrease in freedom with regard to the dignity of the person. The attitude that reconciles the search for self-realization with the reality of “otherness” and that prepares us for mutual exchange and solidarity is *welcome*.

In today’s Gospel reading, Luke highlights the fact that Christ practiced this attitude as a means of communicating the truth (cf. Lk. 15:1-2). When people feel welcomed, they are disposed to search for the truth that leads to a genuine experience of freedom. Believers who have met Christ as “the truth that frees” (cf. Jn. 8:32) build relationships that view others as an enrichment, not a hindrance, to their lives. Welcome is an attitude proper to the faith of persons who have recognized the true face of the God they communicate. It moves in two directions: toward self and toward others because only in this way can each person reach complete self-realization and weave fully human relationships. An attitude of welcome makes one ready to view others positively and overcome divisions. It recognizes others as brothers and sisters instead of rivals: “Your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found” (Lk. 15:32). God the Father recognizes the face of his Son in us and we must recognize others as our brothers and sisters—persons who are children in the Son, just like we are.

1st Sunday

Adoration

«Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.»

(Lk. 4:8)

2nd Sunday

Listening

«This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.»

(Lk. 9:35)

3rd Sunday

Conversion

«Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.»

(Lk. 13:3)

4th Sunday

Welcome

«Your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.»

(Lk. 15:32)

5th Sunday

Newness of Life

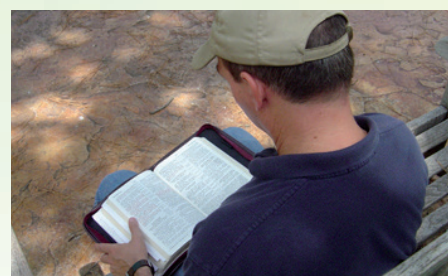
«Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.»

(Jn. 8:11)

Prayer

God our Father,
you are pleased to recognize in us
the face of your Son.
Teach us to welcome one another
as your children
and thus overcome every division
and fear.

Jesus,
you welcome all people just as they are
and raise them to the dignity
of children of God.
Help us to be attentive to our neighbor
so as to witness credibly to you,
the Truth that frees.



*Spirit of Love,
you reveal the face of God to us.
Help us reflect the divine image
by living in genuine charity
and by welcoming all people
as our brothers and sisters. Amen.*

Fr. Renato D’Auria