

Pastor's Page for October 2016

Dear Saints,

To rally as a nation and as a congregation ... in response to our Lord, pray: Make us instruments of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Yes, this is the theme expressed in the glass display case this past month.

Originally I wanted to find some way to observe the 15th anniversary of 9/11 ... a terrible tragedy ... also remembering the heroic responses, our need for faith, hope and prayer. Our Rally Sunday had also been designated as Patriots Day. I didn't want it to be a depressing remembrance, even though there have been many negative repercussions as a culture and global community. In the sermon of the day, I talked about the need to rally in the midst of crises, and the need of compassion in our shepherding, striving for none to be lost.

We all experience losses in life, sometimes in painful isolation, other times as a wounded community. Shared pain can begin to heal us, unless it becomes a ritual of inflicting more wounds.

I'm asking us all to be personally accountable to this Prayer of Saint Francis in the coming weeks and months. Our faith, witness, and leadership needs to rally if we are going to be the shepherds to guide and inspire the congregation of All Saints. This

does not sugarcoat painful dilemmas nor avoid the realities of awkward crises. It is instead a disciplined journey of spiritual humility and healthy humor. Instead of focusing on the one finger pointing to someone else, notice the three fingers pointing back at yourself. Demonstrate pity and compassion when another is struggling, instead of criticism and judgment. Instead of searching out people's flaws, we can recognize their limitations and seek to discover their potentials.

Philippians 4:8-9 declares -
"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy ... think on such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Colossians 3:12-17 commands -
"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe your selves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

I cannot claim to always live this way ... but I am perpetually called back to be

accountable, and hopefully put back on the path of reconciliation and inspiration as Christ's ambassador. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20) You are too!

When it appears that people are struggling to get along at any function, perhaps you've heard me say: "Everybody welcome; everybody get along." Allow these scriptures and the Prayer of Saint Francis to become the guiding monitor for

us as a congregation. Christ can bring good fruit from times of crises, as we plant the right spiritual seeds to cultivate. May our Lord help each of us discern what to say and not say, do and not do, in order to help one another and this congregation to rally in faith, hope, and love ...

Christ's blessings, Pastor Nathan