

Proper 18A 2014 Aurora

One of the most marvelous awesome abilities of the Human Body is how wounds are able to heal. We take for granted that when we scratch open our skin or bruise ourselves, the injury will over a reasonable length of time heal as if it had never happened.

Of course more serious cuts, breaks and bruises, take more time, needing outside intervention to aid the process. Afterwards, scars may be left behind, or functions compromised.

I'm not talking about catastrophic events, organ failure or infection and disease, but even in those cases the body's ability to heal itself is assumed in the treatment.

A surgeon once said to me, " I am really nothing more that a sophisticated plumber, I go in and hook things up but then must step back and watch in amazement as the miraculous healing hopefully take place.

Our lessons today speak of the presence of healing powers within the Body of Christ, the Church. The Gospel of Matthew emphasis is on doing everything possible to bring healing, restoration and reconciliation to God's people.

Whenever a diverse gathering of people begins to expand and welcome new members, variations, differences in believing, worshiping, values, morals and ethics are put into the mix. However, the blend needs to conform to the interpretations handed down by tradition, reason, and Holy Scriptures. Life together in the church follows rules for life in the household of God.

Just as a cook follows a recipe to make a fine cake or soup, the ingredients must be the right in order to produce the desired outcome. But as we know, it is the variations within the ingredients that give us the multitude of varieties we can cook. I've always been amazed how different ways of combining eggs, milk, flour with other things can produce everything from pancakes to soufflés, breads and endless other possibilities.

But a recipe can go sour and be a disappointment if we leave something out or put the wrong thing in let alone goof up the method, sequence or conditions.

I think that our fellowship in a church can go great if we follow the recipe or turn problematic if we don't. Variety and diversity are definitely the "spice of Life" but sometimes conflict and disagreement develops.

The Gospel today provides several opportunities for fixing things when they go wrong. The point of these procedures is to provide several opportunities for repentance and reconciliation in order to maintain the well-being and unity of the community and relationships.

The process is based on an honest expectation of good will and reflects Jesus' law of love.

Since the early church grew out of Jewish culture, these procedures are found in the common heritage of Jewish and Christian congregations. The difference is Jesus revelation that it is the law of love which motivates us to do everything possible to bring peace and concord to God's people.

When the 'we' are injured in body we try to do all we can to be healed. The same hold for injuries in our emotions, relationships, matters of the heart. St Paul reminds us that the 10 commandments are based on one law of love. Injurious acts against self and neighbor when they happened need to be address, treated, so that healing and recovery can occur.

In medical terms, the sooner treatment begins of a wound the quick healing can take place. But if things get worse more intervention needs to take place. And if all else fail, sometime amputation happens.

Yet this harsh suggestion for things that defy recovery, when applied to people comes off as more final that Jesus would have intended. We are still called to love those who wrong and defy us.

Jesus assures us that if we first discern what God would want us to do, we will take the right course of action. We are to reflect the will of God in our decision making, not generate it. Jesus teaches us as His servants to do His will rather than requiring that He do our will.

It all comes down to Grace. It is what binds us together and empowers us to do what is right, what God wants us to do. Grace guides us to tell the truth in love and grace keeps us living in mutual respect as a true community of faith and also in our interaction with others.

Hear now a most beautifully worded prayer I hope sums up the message of today.

May the healing you most need, mind, body, or spirit, embrace you like a long lost friend, may you feel the change to strength flow through you like light, may you be at peace within the shelter of a love that never leaves you.

And all God's people said, "Amen".