



## May 26, 2019

### The 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*"Holy Father, I pray...that they all be one..." –John 17:2-3*

Dear Friends;

Christ is risen!

Carl Jung (1875-1961) the famous psychiatrist came from a religious family. His father and five uncles were all Swiss Reformed Church ministers. He was critical of his Christian heritage. Too much of Christianity had become focused on external behaviors. It was moralistic and ineffective in actually effecting change in people or culture. He perceived his own father and uncles to be psychologically unhealthy.

Jung was not an atheist nor was he anti-Christian. He said that each of us has an inner "God Archetype." He described this as "the instinct to make things whole." This God Archetype drives us to greater inclusivity. It comes from a deep acceptance of the REAL. It balances opposites and shows compassion toward the self. It is the ability to recognize and forgive our shadow side in ourselves and others. For Jung this wholeness is not to be confused with moralism. Moralism is about the ego. Moralism denies human weakness that each of us must accept. It seeks to blame and condemn. The wholeness of which Jung speaks is not about expelling people or things. It is about holding and balancing opposites. It is about finding harmony.

The startling thing that Jesus reveals about God is that God is a loving relationship. Jesus affirms the faith of Israel that God is ONE. But he also shows us that within the oneness of God is DIVERSITY. Jesus, who is the Christ of God in the flesh, is one with God (Father). The bond that binds them together is the Spirit—the intense love between them. Our passage from the Gospel of John comes from the farewell that Jesus is addressing to his disciples. They (and us) are invited to share in the loving relationship we name God. What does this mean?

God is not to be found in rules or coercion. God cannot be forced into us. God must be found in our very being and living. Beverly Wildung Harrison writes: *Our knowledge of God is in and through each other. Our knowledge of each other is in and through God. We act together and find good in each other and in God; and our power grows together, or we deny our relation and reproduce a violent world where no one experiences holy power.* In other words the quality of our relationship with God is found in the quality of our relations with others. And the quality of our relationship with others is a measure of the quality of our relationship with God.

The early Church knew this. It struggled to find harmony in an increasingly diverse community. In the first reading from Acts, there is a struggle between Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus. The Gentiles had been what were called "Godfearers." They were attached to local synagogues. They were attracted to Jewish community life—their care and concern for each other, and the honesty by which these Jewish folk lived. These Godfearers followed the basic morality of Judaism. However, they did not make the final step to be circumcised or follow all the requirements of the Mosaic Law—like keeping the dietary restrictions (Kosher).

St Paul wanted to creatively include them as full members of the Christian community. He felt that God had opened a new way to them through faith in Jesus. There was no need to be circumcised. Faith in Christ was circumcision of the heart. Others disagreed with Paul. The community sets out to find a resolution. Under the guidance of the Spirit they came to a compromise that allowed for the diversity in the community. They would not force the Gentiles who believed in Jesus to be circumcised or completely follow kosher. They were to stay away from some foods. They were to observe rules about marriage so as not to cause division in the community. But they were on in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Both sides came together. They were able to find the inclusion and harmony necessary to hold the community together. Unity is not uniformity. Uniformity is about forcing everyone to be the same. Unity is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit holds us together in our diversity. In our age of extremes we need to realize that God is found in us and also in everyone else. Pope Francis says that we need to develop a culture of encounter and dialogue. The Spirit frees us to see our unity in diversity. As one early Church father said: *In essential things unity; in non-essential things diversity; in all things charity.*

Peace,

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.stannechurchbyron.com](http://www.stannechurchbyron.com)*