

**Sunday, May 6, 2012 – Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
**Prepared by Sr. Peg Kilduff, MM, Lima, Peru**

Acts 9:26-31; Responsorial Psalm 22:26-32; 1 John 3:18-24; John 15: 1-8

What characterizes a Christian community? The readings today say: that we believe and that we love.

Even more, if we do this, we abide in God and God in us. “And by this we know that God abides in us, by the Spirit which has been given to us. So little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.”

Just one little anecdote to begin: One day I was walking across an open field to my house in Caja de Agua, Lima, Peru, having just purchased seven oranges – one for each day of the week I thought. Little Marlene approached me. “How many people do you live with?” she asked. “For now, I live by myself,” I answered. She cast her eyes down, her seven-year old face very thoughtful and then spoke up: “I just saw you buy seven oranges. I have five people in my house. How about if we share? Two for you and five for me!”

What could I do? This is an example of a society guided by sufficiency rather than storing up or hoarding. It is simple: We share. Over and over the Marlenes of the world teach us that the problem is not resources but equal distribution based in concern and love for the other.

What the liturgy of the word is saying to us this Sunday, then, is that if our love is to be fruitful, we need to be nourished by the sap or vitality that is Jesus. And secondly, that our testimony speaks of our faith without words. Faith that is not inspired by God’s abiding Spirit, and carried over into action, is simply theory, a rite, emptiness. The concrete and lovely reading of Paul is given to us as an example. Paul let himself be found by Jesus and then he walked in that Presence the rest of his very active life. Together they produced fruit!

Perhaps we could look together this Sunday at some of the fruits of love.

First, there definitely should be a concern for the weakest member, for the poorest who is in need. Because once the sick member is well, the whole family feels and acts well. In Latin America we translate all those words into: **Option for and with the poor**. While this is a way of life, applicable to all areas, let us consider option for and with the poor and global warming.

It comes as a great surprise for many people, even people living here, that Peru is the third most vulnerable country in terms of the impact of climate change. For example, the glaciers in Peru, which were a glory to behold, have shrunk over the past 35 years due to global warming, causing the total glacier area to be reduced by a quarter. This has already caused a 12 percent reduction of fresh water from the mountains reaching the costal planes. Water needed in towns and cities and to irrigate crops is increasingly and dangerously being affected. This generates serious agricultural (as well as health) concerns for the near future.

Given the present scientific projected increase in temperature, by the time today’s little children have reached 25 or 30 years old, Peru’s tropical glaciers will very likely have disappeared completely and the water supply for 60 percent of the Peruvian population will be seriously diminished.

The melting glaciers also wreak havoc for miners, forming lakes which burst out from valleys, and send walls of whatever water, mud, stones and vegetation is left on the mountain sides ripping through makeshift towns, destroying everything in its wake. And so

it was in the mining camp of Winchumayo in the province of Carabaya in Puno: These mud filled waters of death from the melted glaciers took the lives of children, youth and men as it buried 50 miners' homes built near the open pits of the informal gold mine. More than 300 miners work there in the mine controlled by a member of Congress and the mayor of the district. Among the dead were Axel Miranda Arce, 17 years old, and his younger brother Ricardo, age 15; both worked beside their father in the mines. According to a recent article, it is estimated that since the 1940s more than 30,000 people have lost their lives in similar mud slide catastrophes. But then, life goes on too easily – heedless of disastrous ecological and economic effects on the poor.

In too many countries, the lack of knowledge about the impact of climate change and how to respond to it exacerbates the increasing negative environmental, economic and health effects. In this regard, we in Peru are still in the very early stages of awareness of the problem. It would seem that many of the world's poorest countries in Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America, equally are in the same state.

We are called to listen to the voices of the indigenous who beg us to take care of earth, and together search for alternatives leading to solutions. Mutual love demands the attention to mutual concerns. We are all needy members of the earth community and must go out of ourselves, love one another and care for all of creation. Love, based in faith, challenges each and all of us then to action.

So many other needs go much deeper than quick economic solutions. It is hard to get a grasp on our love for others and the effective concern and responsibility that love demands in a global village. We need policies that do not look for investors as much as they look for opportunities to dialogue among many peoples from different countries and races; that respect and share creation's resources. We need to bury our arms for violence and war and to take up a spirituality of Creation, that gift from God that propels us toward creating a more inter-connected world.

We need to move away from the anthropomorphic view that has dominated social and theological thinking for so long, of "conquering the earth" toward one of care and protection for our common home.

We need to really live that evangelical call: ***Little children, let us love one another for Love is of God and from God and IS God.***

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