

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

By Fr. Greg Ames

I never read the book, even as it climbed the best seller list, it didn't interest me. And given the poor reviews—most said that it is so boring it will put you to sleep—I will probably not see the movie. Yet, I am intrigued by the controversy and the conversations that *The DaVinci Code* has produced. Hundreds of thousands of books, periodicals and websites have resulted over the past years due to this book. There are as many opinions as there are people who have read the book. I looked at a number of websites devoted to the *DaVinci Code*; one continued an essay written by Hugh Hewitt, a professor and author. He writes, *The release of the DaVinci Code provides a unique opportunity to discuss the person of Jesus Christ with many who would never welcome the opportunity. Which is why savvy Christians welcome the hoopla about the book and the film; it will launch a million conversations.... it won't be hard to use the release of (the movie) to once again re-educate Americans on the real claims made by the Gospels. But it will require believers willing to do the homework and to enter the conversation.*

While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening.

We are coming to the end of the Easter Season. At the end of the Lenten Season, we look back and reflect on what difference our Lenten practices have had on our lives. The end of the Easter Season has us not look backward, but ahead: how in the days, weeks and months again, will anyone know the real Jesus through me? That is the challenge not simply of Easter, but of being a Christian: to be person who is willing to do the homework, and to live in such a way that people do come to understand not only who the really Jesus, but who he really calls us to be:

CODE: Part of the premise of the book and the movie is that Leonardo DaVinci's painting contain hidden clues that unlock the code to the real identity of Jesus. For the Christians, it is not a painting hanging in the Louvre, but the images in the Gospel, that unlock the real identity of Jesus. The author of John tells us that *This is love: not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us.* And that is it. You flip through the Gospels. Jesus goes to the poor; Jesus stands with the widow, the prostitute, the tax collector, the leper, the blind and all whose illness made them outcasts. And the cross.... It is these images that tell us the truth of who Jesus; and it is these images that we must commit to memory: Jesus comes to us; not because we deserve or said

all the right prayers, but he comes to us because he is love. And he says that even in our worst hour; our most terrible sin, God's love is there to heal.

COMMAND: *I have called you friends.* How is it that we so often forget that Jesus says we are his friends; not his students, his slaves, his disciple wannabes. Friends. He calls us friends. Over the years I have met so many people who have gone through tough time, terrible times, and then said to me, you know, I learned who my real friends are. Real friends stand with each other, make time for each other, will be inconvenienced and sacrifice for each other. That is not only the kind of friend Jesus is to us, but how he commands us to live. With all its mystery and intrigue, the *DaVinci Code* never gets to the heart of matter: who you say Jesus says something about who you are. If he is nothing, then you are nothing. But if he is the Savior who calls you friend, then you are God's friend who willingly lives the command to love.

CONVERSATION: I am in the grocery store getting about 12 items. While the cashier is ringing me up, I am bagging. As I almost done, I hear her mutter, I think there is a problem. I look up at her and the screen and see that my total comes to \$124. We look at each other, and at the stuff I bought, and realized something was wrong. Then we saw the problem: the deli sandwich I bought rang up at \$85. She scanned it again, and sure enough the bar code said, \$85. I looked at her and said that is pretty expensive sandwich. Without looking up and reaching for the phone to get the manger she said, Trust me, I've had it; it's not worth it.

When Peter entered Cornelius' house he looks around at a motley group of people, from different backgrounds and different walks of life. In the eyes of the world they don't seem like much. And all of sudden he gets it: no matter how different, how odd, how unusual, they were all precious in God's eyes. And Jesus saw each person as worthy of being his friend.

How will people discover the real Jesus. Not through a best selling book or a Leonardo picture. They begin to get a glimpse of the real Jesus when they see you, welcoming, opening, listening, and treating every person as invaluable. That is the conversation we must be willing to enter.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Acts 10: 25-48

1 John 4: 7-10

John 15: 9-17

May 13, 2012

靈 修 生 活

彼 此 相 愛

林 思 川 神 父

福音：若十五 9-17：經文脈絡： 在上個主日的福音中，耶穌藉助葡萄樹的圖像說明祂和門徒之間的關係，強調門徒們絕對不能和祂分離(若十五 1-8)。這個主日的福音選自若十五 9-17，延續前面的談話，耶穌的言論重心轉變為門徒們彼此之間的關係，教導他們如何在信仰團體中生活。

天父的愛是一切的根源： 耶穌是真葡萄樹，「真」是「唯一」的意思，透過這句話耶穌強調自己是天父的獨生子(若一 18)：他從「起初」就與父同在(若一 2)，「居住在父懷裡」(若一 18)，雖然「降生成人」(若一 14)，卻仍留在父的愛中(若十五 10)。耶穌留在父愛中的具體證明就是祂遵守了父的命令，並且完成父所派遣的使命，使父在子身上受到光榮(若十三 31-32)。耶穌之所以能夠如此光榮父，完全是因為父對他的愛，父對子的愛是一切的根源。耶穌教導門徒們存留在這個愛內，便能得到愛的果實，圓滿無缺的喜樂。

彼此相愛的命令： 源自於天父的愛，不僅有天人之間的縱向幅度，還有人與人之間的橫向幅度，因此耶穌命令他們「彼此相愛」。彼此相愛並非單純的、主觀的情緒表現，而是具有一個客觀的標準，也就是他們所經驗到的耶穌的愛：「你們該彼此相愛，如同我愛了你們一樣」(若十五 12)。耶穌說這是一個「新的命令」(若十三 34)，因為這個愛的標準是祂為一切人捨掉性命所表達的愛。這當然是超過門徒們本性的能力，單靠己力絕對無法達到的標準。但由於門徒先經驗了基督顯示給他們的愛，他們的能力因此而被提昇，才能夠完成這個「新的命令」並分享基督的喜樂。

門徒和耶穌之間的「友誼」： 透過彼此相愛的命令，福音的主題轉移到「友誼」上面。友誼是希臘和羅馬哲學家常常談論的主題，若望福音這一段經文很可能也受到希臘、羅馬文學的影響。亞里斯多德在他的倫理學當中曾經說過：「對一個高貴的人士而言，他應該為他的朋友做一切事；而且在必要時，應該為他們捨掉性命。」但是若望福音所表達的是，耶穌透過交付自己的生命而確保了他和門徒間的友誼，從他的死亡中才能夠推引出弟兄之間的愛。然而，他們做為一個彼此相愛的團體，必須向世界做出見證，也就是結出果實。

友誼的基礎：服從和啟示： 門徒和耶穌之間的友誼關係建立在另外一個規則上：耶穌從來沒有稱自己是他們的朋友，而只是把他們稱為是自己的朋友，因此他們的友誼關係是建立在「服從」上面。此外，一般而言友誼的根本標誌是彼此坦誠，但是，耶穌稱門徒們為朋友，卻是因為他把父啟示給他們，這個末世性的啟示使他們自由，也因此他們不再是僕人，而是耶穌的朋友。

天主的揀選： 這個友誼的起點完全是由父開始的，並不是他們把天主選為朋友，因為他們完全沒有這個能力：情況是完全相反的，是天主選擇他們稱他們為朋友。天主之所以選擇了他們，完全是由於天父的愛；但是天主也要求他們結出果實，而使這個友誼能夠成為長久存在的關係。由於弟兄之間的愛來自耶穌的命令，因此並非只是一個感覺上的事情，而是一個義務，必須的在具體的生活要求當中表達出來。門徒團體在彼此相愛的實踐中，加深彼此間的友誼，也證明了他們和耶穌之間的友誼。他們便是留在耶穌的愛內，如此，他們因耶穌的名不論求什麼，天父都必賜給他們。

綜合： 葡萄樹的比喻中著名的句子：「離了我，你們什麼也不能做」，也可以用積極的方式表達成為：和我在一起，你們可以成就一切事。這樣的話語就成為在基督徒生活的目標：和基督完全的結合，在這個合一當中一切都可能。耶穌稱門徒為朋友，同時給予他們使命，要求他們彼此相愛。如果他們這麼做了，並不是滿全和耶穌建立友誼的基礎，而是證明他們真是耶穌的朋友。基督徒彼此相愛，並不是他們爭取天主愛的「籌碼」，而是他們得到天主的愛的「後果」。這個情形用在「揀選」的概念上也非常恰當，我們可以反向閱讀若十五 16 的經文：誰如果顯示出結出了果實，誰便可以宣稱自己是被天主所揀選的。「彼此相愛、結出果實」不是基督徒團體存「留」在天主愛內的原因，而是其必然結果。

摘自「教友生活周刊」

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 二 年 五 十 三 日

宗 10: 25-48 ; 若一 4: 7-10 ; 若 15: 9-17