Loving Companionship

A Homily for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2026

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost - Amen.

With each passing year, it seems that there is a continued and growing focus no longer on the 'we,' but on the 'me.' We find ourselves living in a world whose medias and messaging more and more often emphasize looking out for ourselves, and only ourselves. A world where the phrase, 'pick yourself up by your bootstraps' - an originally satirical phrase as it details a quite impossible act - is said with ever increasing sincerity.

A world where someone faced with poverty is told they should have 'gotten a better job,' or 'been more responsible' while ignoring if either of those two things are applicable to them. A world where a family facing food scarcity is met with, 'well, why is that my problem? They should have spent their money more wisely.'

A world where the inability to afford medical treatment is answered with a shrug of the shoulders and a suggestion that the person should just, 'start a GoFundMe' and stop bothering others about the problem. Indeed, we increasingly live in a world that focuses on the 'me,' and not the 'we.'

In today's epistle we learn about walking in the spirit, what it looks like, and what it does not. We learn that walking in the spirit does not involve pride and vainglory - attaching our names to this and that, affixing ourself as center and savior of others. It does not look like provoking others, whether to 'own' them because they think differently than us, or because we take delight in their indignation. It does not look like envying others, or imagining that they have something to envy purely for the sake of villainizing them.

We've all heard people talking about walking with the spirit, about living and making Christianity a central part of their lives. It's splayed across many news networks each and every day. But I encourage you to always listen when someone begins to proclaim and talk about walking with the spirit...And listen whether what comes before or after truly shows that.

Because there's an important part about today's epistle I haven't yet mentioned. The importance of community, and of meekness. Indeed, humility and humbleness are central aspects for walking in the spirit. If we do not walk with these, then we do not walk at all. It also says that if we do not bear one another's burdens - we do not fulfil the law of Christ.

What do these two things, these essential two things, boil down to? Two words, 'loving companionship,' that is the essence of walking with Christ. We do not walk alone, we never walk alone. As Christians we are implicitly part of a community of brothers and sisters. But that companionship is not made by the color of our skin, by who we love or how, by culture, or wealth, or difference, or even creed. It is made by something more beautiful...A shared humanity, a humanity Christ shared, and through which Christ redeemed us.

So in a world increasingly focused on the 'me,' where we exclude others. Or put them into other groups, or foment hatred against others...or provocation...or envy? It is a world where 'loving companionship' increasingly takes a backseat. Those uncomfortable with this core requirement of Christianity, loving companionship, might accuse me at this time of promoting a world without right and wrong, where we don't correct anyone, where sin is simply allowed...They're forgetting another part of today's epistle...

Loving Companionship

"Instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness...If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing..." Loving companionship includes loving correction. It does not do away with instruction and correction, but it puts an important modifier on it. We must do it in the spirit of love, of care, of tenderness...To those who walk with us, and even to those who seem to walk against us.

We hear a lot about correction in today's world. It's much rarer, unfortunately, to hear about 'loving correction.' Think of those you see in the media, in our politics, in our daily lives. How often, when they talk to - or talk about - those they disagree with, is it done in love and charity? Far too rarely, it seems.

But loving correction does not mean correction that is not forceful. Especially when done in the defense or sake of others. In defense of the weak or of the marginilized. If someone is being a bigot, loving correction does not mean you are required to 'put up with' or 'soften' your criticism of them. Love does not require passivity in the face of cruelty or bigotry. We may have to oppose wrongdoing firmly, especially when another person is being harmed. Meekness is not cowardice, and charity does not mean allowing injustice to continue unchallenged.

Originally I was planning to move to the Gospel now - but I'm already going to be in trouble for such a long homily - so to summarize.

Christ demonstrates a communal spirit in the gospel, a loving spirit, one which we all should demonstrate. Christ saw the tears and sorrow of the widow...and didn't ask if she was overreacting. Didn't ask if she deserved it. Didn't ask why this 'different other' was making a noise. He saw pain, he saw a burden and - like in the Epistle - he stepped in and did what he could do to mend it. I hope you all will do the same. Now obviously you probably won't be going about resurrecting people - though if you learn that talent, please let me know.

But don't let vainglory and pride get in the way of helping another because their situation seems impossible, or you're unsure if you yourself can solve it. Go to them meekly, in humility, and just offer help. Maybe you won't solve everything, maybe you don't need to. But go in a spirit of meekness...And maybe the Lord will use you in ways you never imagined.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Questions about the homily, about Old Catholicism, or about faith? You are always welcome to reach out to Father Kevin:

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Who are Old Catholics?

Old Catholics are part of the historic Catholic tradition which did not accept later Roman developments of papal authority, regarding them as ahistorical and unscriptural, while not rejecting the privileged position of the Pope. Old Catholics preserve the sacramental life, apostolic ministry, and ancient worship of the Church while maintaining a tradition of greater local autonomy and pastoral openness. This includes accepting and celebrating LGBTQ+ marriages and ordaining women to the priesthood on the basis of historical study and scriptural exegesis. Mary, Haven of Grace is an inclusive Old Catholic parish where all are welcome to pray, learn, and seek God together.