**“I See Jesus in You” May 21, 2017**

**John 14:15-21 Pr. H. Adachi**

May the Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ be poured into your hearts!

I’ve shared this with some of you in the past.  So you might remember…In Zulu, a major South African dialect, the word for greeting someone is “ Sawubona!” and in response, the other person says “Ngikhona.”

I have a pastor colleague who serves in the State of New York.  He is an American of African descent and he taught me something important.  Sawubona has a much deeper meaning than just “hello”.

Sawubona also means “I see God in you.” And the response, “Nigikhona” has the additional meaning of “I see God in you, also” When I learned this, I had an Aha! moment and that is why I am sharing this yet again.

The Gospel text given today is a paragraph that Jesus spoke the night before Jesus was crucified. In this paragraph, he told about his promise that he would send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. In the Easter season, we have seven Sundays.  I think that the first three Sundays, the focus was more on encountering the risen Lord.

Then the latter half, the focus is transitioning from encountering Jesus to a deeper relationship between Jesus and humanity. While Jesus was fulfilling his promise to send the Holy Spirit, he was also showing his deep love, compassion, and mercy to all humanity and not only to his disciples 2000 years ago, but also to the generations yet to come.

I picked up some key words from the text that was read a short time ago.
Verse 15: love, keep my commandment
V. 16-17: the Spirit be with you. the world cannot see, but you know him.

V. 18: I will not leave you orphaned.

V. 19-20: the world no longer sees me, but you will know me. You in me and I in you.

V. 21: keep the commandments, love…

The central point of this paragraph is verse 18 in which Jesus says, “I will not leave you orphaned.” Some of you might be orphans or treated as orphans in your past. Or some of you might not know your biological parent or parents…However, this morning you are worshiping the Lord, Jesus Christ, in this sanctuary, because of God’s love and your love of the Lord.

Around the central verse 18, the verses from 16 through 17 and verses from 19 through 20 are basically saying the same thing. And also 15th and 20th verses are the same. However, if you compare 16-17 verses and 19-20 verses, Jesus was not only saying that he would send the Holy Spirit, but also Jesus himself comes into each one of us.

Because God loves and we love the Lord, the Holy Spirit is with us and the Lord is also with us. God is accompanying and walking with us whenever our situation is troubling and/or chaotic.

What does it really mean to us?  Although the verses read today, are what Jesus discussed one night before the crucifixion, consist of only one paragraph; I think we should remember some other things, too.

On the same day, which is often called Maundy Thursday, the meaning of Maundy is “Commandment.” On the night Jesus commanded us to “Love one another.” This commandment is not easily kept. Jesus even said “love your enemies” in the past.

Can we love one another as human beings?  Can you love someone who hate you or someone whom you do not like?  Two weeks ago, we had our Pacifica Synod Assembly. One of the speakers was Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander who is a Lutheran Pastor but serves a UCC congregation in Nebraska.  Her doctoral study was related to meditation and during the Assembly, she guided four spiritual meditative sessions.

The first one she did was very interesting…each one of us was asked to meditate looking at a wrapped Hershey’s chocolate kiss while thinking about the people who created that chocolate for almost 10 minutes. And then look at an unwrapped one for another 10 minutes; 10 minutes was probably a little bit of an exaggeration but for me, I felt that it was a very long time to ponder a Hershey’s kiss, but since some of us were not patient enough and ate it much earlier than we were told to do so.

I do not want to do that again here at Resurrection, but now I would like to try a similar practice that worked well. Please straighten your back and put both of your soles on the ground.  Just relax.  If you prefer to close your eyes, please do so.  And please think about a person whom you have difficulty loving.  Please inhale deeply and exhale slowly. Let the Holy Spirit come into your heart.

Again, please inhale very deeply and exhale very slowly. Let Jesus come to you, remembering what he said, “you in me and I in you.”  Let’s inhale and exhale very slowly.  If your eyes were closed, please open your eyes. For each one of you, that came to the Sanctuary since you love Jesus, “Sawubona!” I see Jesus in each one of you.  And Jesus in you can love everyone since all are created by the Lord, our God. Amen.