Easter 6 – C

MDP of God

I want to start by wishing all of you a very happy Memorial Day weekend—as we as a nation remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we could be free--- our readings today at Mass —*tell us of Jesus’ deep desire for us to be able to know the truth that will set us free*

Throughout the gospels Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life”—Jesus promised several times—today’s gospel is one of those places—He promised that he’d send the Holy Spirit so that we could know the truth that comes from God---*so that we can know the truth*

And in our 1st reading we saw how that promise of Jesus comes to fulfillment—the Holy Spirit is given to the Church—and when those with Apostolic authority gather to discern God’s Will—*they are guaranteed that the Holy Spirit will lead them to the truth*

So we saw in that 1st reading those with Apostolic authority said, “**It is the decision of the Holy Spirit”**

They didn’t say, “This is our opinion—you might have a different one”—They didn’t say, “we can’t know what God wants for us—you just do what you think is right”—No ^^^^

When the Apostles or their successors gather together and declare the truth from God—we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the teaching is what God wants us to know—that it is the truth that will set us free—that it is the decision of the Holy Spirit

In our gospel Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit in all truth—and there are several other places where Jesus promises this

*And that promise is an expression of God’s love*—because without knowing the truth we’ll wander in the darkness

But my friends—many people today deny that we can know truth that comes from God—and that denial is destroying the lives of countless people

There are many today who say, “Those so called laws of God are oppressive—they are a big burden—they’re keeping people from living their lives fully”

Let me use an analogy—God’s laws are like the rules of a soccer game—following the rules of a soccer game aren’t oppressive—they don’t keep people from having a good time—the rules are there so that people can have the most possible fun

The rules keep people who are playing relatively safe—the rules give form and structure to the game---**without the rules there’d be chaos**—everyone would be doing their own thing—people would get hurt in far greater numbers—and without the rules there’s no determining who won—*or even how to win—the game would be pointless*

In the same way—God’s laws are there so we can find the most joy—the most peace—possible in life

Without God’s laws—we’re going to hurt each other—we’ll fail in far greater ways to help each other--- **there’s chaos**

Over the past 40 or 50 years as more and more people have rejected the clear teaching of God--- our culture has descended into greater and greater chaos

And my friends—it’s important to know—*no person is more compassionate that Jesus*—**no one loves you more than Jesus**—no one cares more about you than Jesus

But there are people out there who’ll tell you—“those laws of God are too burdensome for you—you don’t have to do that---*as if they care about you more than Jesus*—like they know what’s better for you than Jesus—**they don’t**

But many people have bought those lies—why?

Because the laws of God are difficult to follow—they are a challenge— they are hard to live by—why’s that?

**Because life is hard**—*life is challenging—life isn’t easy*

But the laws of God—as difficult as they are to live by at times—they are the best way to live—they lead to the greatest amount of joy possible in this life—they lead to the greatest of happiness and peace

Let me use another analogy—I knew of a man when I was younger---who had terrible problems with his back—that was in the days when back surgeries were very ineffective—*and the man couldn’t function on his own*

The only thing that allowed him to live a somewhat normal life was a back brace that supported his spine—his wife would help him get it on in the morning—*and with it he could function somewhat normally*---without the brace—**he just couldn’t function**

My friends— all of us are wounded by a fallen human nature—morally we are corrupted---and we need God’s Wisdom and *societal support if we’re to live a truly full and meaningful life*

But our culture has removed the supports we need to live the life of joy—the life of happiness –the life of peace God wants us to have

Years ago when most of the culture saw the laws of God as the ideal to try to live by (and again that’s not to say people didn’t fall—and it’s not to say that as a culture we didn’t do some terrible things---the way African Americans and other minorities were treated at times was inexcusable)

But our culture had biblical standards for marriage and family life— *and there was societal pressure to live by those standards*—again people sometimes faltered---but most people tried to live by those standards---which really helped families to stay together and find a lot of happiness

So the societal norms helped people who struggled (and we all struggle to one degree or another)—they were like the back brace for the man whose spine was so bad he couldn’t function without the brace

But now those societal norms are gone—now with the attitude of “no one can tell you what to do—do what will make you happy—take care of # 1”

We have more and more people—especially those who struggle with mental illness—or moral illness

By moral illness I mean people who are all about “Me me me”—“give me give give me” – I want I want I want”

People who struggle with mental or moral illness don’t have the societal support they need to do the right thing---**because our society denies there’s a right thing to do**

And so more and more people make choices that ultimately hurt themselves—that hurt their spouse—that hurt their children—that hurt society as a whole

The people who scream—“don’t force your morality on me”—are forcing their amorality on the rest of us---**and it’s killing people**

It’s killing unborn babies—it’s killing women who’ve made that choice and live with unspeakable pain

It’s killing our inner cities—where more and more people are growing up without a mom and dad who love them *and love each other*

It’s killing young people who are confused on their sexuality

For instance—a lot of amoral people encourage young people to get transgendered--- they’ll tell them, “we can help you”---they don’t mention that individuals who have been transgendered have a suicide rate 20 times higher than the national average---because that choice doesn’t lead to happiness—it’s a denial of who God made them to be

But the people who push this insanity— portray people who are against what they’re doing as haters—and cruel and oppressive *and they portray themselves as caring and loving and compassionate*— but the truth is—in denying the Wisdom of God they are setting up our young people for a life of pain and heartache and confusion

In our gospel today my friends—Jesus said, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words..”

My friends—we as individuals need to decide if we love Him—if we trust Him

We as a society have to decide whether we trust the Wisdom of God—or we’re going to ignore the Wisdom of God--- over the past 40 -50 years as more and more people have decided we can’t know the truth—that there’s no God given rules---//// we’ve seen our families—our society—descend into chaos

As I said—all of us have a fallen human nature—so without societal norms based on God’s Wisdom –we’re all going to struggle more and we will more likely make choices that hurt ourselves and others

But those who struggle especially with mental illness or moral illness--- without societal norms—without a society saying—what you did was wrong—the choice you made was wrong—what you did was selfish and hurt the people you’re supposed to protect

Without societal norms based on God’s Wisdom—we’ll have more and more chaos—more and more broken families—more and more people making foolish choices that hurt themselves and others

My friends—let’s as individuals—choose the Wisdom of God

And on this Memorial Day weekend—when we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice so we could be free---let’s fight for our country—let’s fight to see God’s Wisdom be at the center of our laws—at the center of our culture—at the center of life---so that we truly can as individuals and as a nation---live with freedom