



Wednesday Prayer

6th Sunday of Easter – Advocating for Love

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You did not choose me but I chose you.

And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.” John 15:12-13, 16-17

Jesus continues to impress upon the disciples the depth of God’s abundant love and the desperate need to share this love with all. The disciples have seen how Jesus’ love shows no boundaries – love to those on the margins, to those despised and rejected – and even to those who have betrayed and denied him. The disciples will not have an easy path forward and must rely on God’s love and their love for one another to get them through.

But what happens when we forget these essential messages to love one another in our world? What happens when we despise or reject some, or simply deny they exist? Today, a room full of my fellow Rotary Club members heard from Sarah Harry, MA, LPCC of Courage & Grace Counseling. Sarah shared her work and expertise in providing mental health care with 14–21-year-old youth in the LGBTQIA+ community. She shared sobering statistics about the high levels of anxiety, depression and suicide amongst this community of young people. Some Rotarians shared their own or their children’s experiences of being bullied, harassed, exploited or rejected due to their identity. We talked about the importance of stepping up as allies and advocates to love and affirm all – *“This is my commandment”*.

Our work to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking intersects with the work of affirming and loving all. Those who are rejected by their families or churches, who are bullied in their schools, and who face the anxiety and fear of political attacks against their rights are at significantly higher risk of exploitation and trafficking. Let us choose one another, learn each other’s stories, and love as Jesus has loved us.

*“When you know someone’s story, it becomes much harder to hate them.”
~Sarah McBride*

*“Love him and let him love you. Do you think anything else under heaven really matters?”
~James Baldwin*

Loving God, we pray that our hearts, words, and actions portray the love you have commanded of us. May we affirm all your children as beloved just as they are. May we engage in the hard work of bringing those who despise, reject or deny others into your way of loving all. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.