

## Homily – 5<sup>th</sup> Easter – C.H.A.C.

Acts,14,21-17/Apoc.21,1-5/John,13,31..35

Bishop André Richard, CSC

Brothers, sisters in Christ

It's a tall order that the Gospel sets before the disciples, before us. To love one another as Christ loves us. By this, people will know whose disciples we are. Disciples are people who are learning. We are of that kind. Just to be in this class of people who are on their way to be disciples, who are learning, just this is already a sign of the Kingdom to come, a sign of that new heaven and new earth as seen by the apostle John. It is not what we come to achieve, in loving service to one another, that makes us witnesses to Christ. It is what God works through our ministry.

In the Gospel, love is presented to us as a commandment to be obeyed. This is very demanding. Love cannot normally be ordered: it is given, without constraint or condition. This is how we recognize it, and it is through this love that we recognize the disciples of Christ. When love is a healing agent, when it treats, like the Good Samaritan, the person on the roadside who has been beaten, when it treats the cancer victim, the victim of drugs, violence or AIDS, when it comforts those who have lost their independence—then love takes a human form. It becomes the reflection of Christ's love. This caring love is the reason we are gathered here this morning to celebrate, in the light of Christ Resurrected. The Kingdom of God is already here among us, visible in the health care delivered by the staff of our institutions.

The Book of Revelation is full of images of a new world that is emerging, thanks to the risen Christ. This new heaven and new earth, in John's vision, are there to strengthen the hope of people who are in the midst of persecutions and hardships. According to this vision, there will be no more weeping or pain, no more death. God is making all things new. The Catholic Health Association of Canada is displaying signs of things to come. It gives hope to people who seek relief in their suffering and loneliness. Our Association provides health care workers with spiritual and pastoral training to give a human touch to their work, a touch of respect and dignity.

The Catholic Health Association of Canada provides our healthcare institutions with an important foundation of solidarity. They need this to maintain their Catholic identity and better fulfill their mission, according to the heart of

Christ. As lay persons involved in building God's Kingdom on Earth, you make the Gospel visible. Through your involvement in health care, on behalf of your faith, you show that God is close to those who are suffering. This is a fundamental dimension of the Church to which we all belong, through the grace of our baptism.

Friday morning, you reported a number of pieces of good news that have marked the last year in your respective facilities. I could not help but realize that you were doing exactly what the early Church did when Paul and Barnabas returned from their first evangelization tour. 'When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them.' This morning, on the Lord's day, we want to be this Church. We have heard the wonders of loving service that our healthcare workers are doing, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. As on that day, this opens doors to faith in the living and loving God. Thank you for providing us with this testimony.

On behalf of our Church, I express to you our gratitude for what you do for the poorest and most suffering of the limbs of the body of Christ. Without you, this compassionate face, so typical of the love of Christ and so important to bearing witness to the Gospel, would be missing. You embody the evangelical values that the world needs to see in action. For all of this, let us give thanks to the Lord. Let us offer him our humble efforts, with the sacrifice of Christ. May our work to humanize the Earth be blessed and may it serve to praise God our Father.

+ *André Richard, c.s.c., Archbishop of Moncton.*