

Readings

Acts 2:1-11

Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

Jn 20:19-23

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When Bob (aka Leo XIV) and I were students at Collegio Santa Monica in Rome, the *Economista* (i.e., Treasurer) of the Augustinian community was Padre Nicola. Nicola is best described as Santa Claus without the beard and the red suit; his belly was a bowlful of jelly whenever he laughed (which he did often). Nicola was one of the happiest people I have ever met.

Collegio Santa Monica is an international house for the Augustinians and there are constantly visitors from “every nation under heaven” stopping in and looking for hospitality. One would imagine that the person best suited to fill this position is a polyglot able to speak to these visitors in their mother tongue. We Augustinians follow the spirit rather than common sense. Padre Nicola only spoke Italian and seemed to have little desire to learn another language. While I thought that quite odd, I came to see that he was the perfect person to be the Guest Master at an international house.

Better than anyone whom I have ever met, Padre Nicola spoke the universal language that all people can understand and that is the language of love. Time and time again, I would witness “inhabitants from Asia, Africa” and other nations of Europe and beyond as well as “travelers from Rome” come to his office and leave with a complete understanding of the rules

of the house and a sense of having been welcomed and made to feel that the house in Rome was home for all. It was as if “each one heard (Nicola) speaking in his own language.”

I do not doubt that the many visitors to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost could understand the Apostles, these uneducated men from Galilee who probably only spoke their regional dialect of Aramaic; they were speaking the language of love. These followers of Jesus were proclaiming the message they had heard firsthand from the Son of God now that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. “God is love and love is the first gift, containing all the others” (Catechism 733). As St. Paul writes, “God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

The fruits of the Holy Spirit, in addition to love, are understood by all, no translations are needed: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I am sure that the Universal Pastor, Pope Leo XIV, knows this because he has witnessed its power in the life of Parde Nicola. Pope Leo's message of peace resonates throughout the world. The joy he brought to Africa on his recent visit spoke volumes about the needs of a dynamically growing church, especially one with a poverty of goods but a wealth of love. Leo's demonstrations of kindness and goodness were comprehended by all who witnessed them.

As we celebrate this Pentecost Sunday, let us pray for the courage to use well the gifts we have received. Let us love more, not in words but in deeds. Let us love as we have been loved, as we have witnessed love. Everyone will understand us and be made to feel welcome in the home of our heart.