

Acts 2:1-11

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

I Cor 12:3-7,12-13

Jn 20:19-23

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In the Augustinian House in Rome, *Collegio Santa Monica*, there is always a priest or brother who serves as *Economo* of the community. In his position, the *Economo* would be responsible for purchases and disbursements and would also serve as the director of hospitality. Since *Collegio Santa Monica* is directly across the street from the Vatican, it receives visitors year round from all over the world.

The priest who best served as *Economo* was Padre Nicolo. Nicolo was (and is) a dead ringer for Santa Claus (minus the beard and the red suit). He is jolly and a truly loving individual. He seemed an odd choice for the position, however, because he only spoke one language – Italian. As director of hospitality, one would think that a polyglot would be needed. There are so many visitors from all parts of the globe that one of the demands of the position is to be able to answer questions about all the things that tourists need.

What made Nicolo so successful was that while he may have been fluent in only one human tongue, he spoke another language with unparalleled dexterity and that was the language of love. He made everyone feel welcome. He gave each person his undivided attention; he always anticipated each one's needs. Over the course of time he would learn a smattering of English and Spanish and Japanese and of all the other languages that Augustinians and their visitors speak throughout the world. These small attempts at speaking the tongue of another and learning the words for "room," "towel," and "shower," only endeared him all the more to the hordes of visitors that crossed his threshold. What Nicolo has taught everyone is that when you speak the language of love, you can be understood by anyone.

In today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, it must have been quite a moment when the followers of Jesus stepped out into the crowd and began to speak. There were visitors from all over the then-known-world and each claimed to understand. I can imagine this to be true because I have known Nicolo. Whenever anyone speaks the language of love, he or she is understood. The more one loves and the more one encounters others, the more one picks up a smattering of the words that make others feel welcome: justice, peace, equality, fairness. However, the opposite is also true.

There are so many incomprehensible things that are said today. I can never understand Osama bin Laden and his ilk. It is not because they speak Arabic but rather because he talks hate. I also know that racist and angry words are incomprehensible. I think this is at the heart of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright controversy. I don't think it is just white people who don't understand, many African-Americans are mystified as well. He claims to preach the Word of God; he is gravely mistaken. He is preaching self-righteousness and indignation. He is no better than the people he condemns.

We need not to be hypocrites. Look at the words we use and let us remember that our actions speak louder than words. Do we speak the universal language of the Holy Spirit, the language of love? Or, are we incomprehensible to others because we gossip and speak words of hate, anger, division and hurt. On this feast of Pentecost, let us dedicate ourselves to the language of love.