

**Homily — Fifth Sunday of Easter, C 2019
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

I think Rev. Ron Rolheiser is a very wise man.
I've mentioned him here many times.
He talks about his conviction that we all have within us
both a tall self as well as a small self.

Our tall self is big-hearted, generous, deeply caring, open-minded, inquisitive
and welcoming.
Our small self on the other hand, is fearful, petty, suspicious, jealous, vengeful
and prejudiced.

Now the world, according to Rolheiser, is NOT divided up
between big-hearted people and small-minded people.
Rather our days are divided up between those moments
when we are tall
and those moments when we are small.
We are both tall and short at the same time
and either of these can manifest itself from minute to minute.

So how is this small self in us all healed?
Rolheiser says it is not by somehow beating up on the small self,
either by yourself or by another.

And that's where today's Scriptures come in.

In the last part of today's Gospel reading, Jesus is speaking to his disciples.
A few weeks ago I mentioned that the purpose of biblical narrative is to draw us
all into believing that the story includes us disciples.
So Jesus is saying to us all,
"I give you a new commandment: love one another."
He goes on, "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

Now that's a tall order.
But it is that command, to love as he has shown us how, that will allow us,
with a lot of help from the Holy Spirit,
to draw our small, petty, mean, narrow-minded self
into behaving, slowly but surely.
It's a command that ultimately leads us out
to that place where we encounter the mystery we name God,
the God who IS love itself.

So we have these two parts of us, the tall self and the small self.
In Jungian psychology, the small self would be comparable to the "shadow self."
Robert Bly, the poet says, that small self sits on our shoulder
whispering all the small, fearful, petty stuff.
Bly says you can't kill your shadow, you educate him . . . or her.
Jesus COMMANDS us to do that by "loving one another as I have loved you."

One example of someone who is doing the stuff of educating quite publicly is a man named Christian Piccolini.
He is starring in a TV program called *Breaking Hate*.
He was a "skin head" and filled with hatred from childhood.
Somehow he saw the light after the riots at Charlottesville, Va.
Now, he seeks out other hate group members to help them see the light.
He helps these people live into their tall self.

I see that "loving one another as I have over you" lived out right here all the time.
Living shoulder-to-shoulder with others whether in a marriage or in a houseful of religious women or men is a training ground for educating the small self.

In the first reading today, Paul is with Barnabas.
He's always with a companion in Acts.
Among other things, that enables both of them to notice the small self in the other acting out.
Being with one another helps keep them both keep out of trouble.

The second reading spoke of "new heavens and a new earth."
That's what awaits those who keep working at this "Love one another."

Jesus uses some form of the word glory five times in a short Gospel reading.
Glory is about the unutterable, unimaginable magnificence of the one we call God.
Jesus speak of the Son of Humanity sharing in that glory.
The implication is that so do we all.
That's our tallness.

A question for all of us to be asking ourselves frequently:
Am I loving like Jesus loves us all?
Am I willing to go to the places where things are dark,
and mean and hurting in the world,
as well as inside myself,
and love like Jesus?