

Aloha service Homily
July 23, 2017
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Romans 8:18-25: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Galatians 5:22-23, 25: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

The Hawaiian word “Aloha” has come to mean both “hello” and “goodbye.” The deeper meaning, based on its roots Alo meaning presence and ha meaning breath, means literally the presence of breath or the breath of life. Similarly, the word for Spirit in Hebrew, ruach, and the word for Spirit in Greek, pneuma, is the same word for breath.

There is a very spiritual component to the word “Aloha.” It is more than a greeting; it is a way of life. The spiritual dimension to life reminds us that there is more to life than what we see, what we can acquire, what we can hold in our hands. There is a connection to something outside of ourselves that empowers, sustains and guides us.

The Aloha Spirit is considered a rule or law in Hawaii that all citizens and government officials are obligated to follow to ensure that others are treated with deep care and respect.

Hawaiian children are taught to recite and memorize a pledge on the spirit of Aloha: Aloha is being a part of all, and all being a part of me. When there is pain, it is my pain. When there is joy, it is also mine. I respect all that is a part of the Creator and part of me. I will not willfully harm anyone or anything. The earth, the sky, the sea are mine to care for, to cherish and to protect. This is Hawaiian – this is Aloha!

Eventually, this pledge evolved into a condensed code of ethics that is still in use today. Aloha Spirit is the spirit of the life force that expresses good feelings and thoughts to others, connecting the mind and the heart within and between people.

The acrostic for Aloha is as such:

A Akahai, meaning kindness
L Lokahi meaning unity
O Oluolu meaning agreeability
H Haahaa meaning humility
A Ahonui meaning patience

This is similar to the fruits of the spirit, noted in our readings today, which are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control.

On March 13, 1959, the day Hawai'i became a state, Rev. Abraham Akaki delivered a sermon in Honolulu to describe the heart of the connection between Aloha and the Christian message. He writes:

Aloha is the power of God, the Great Spirit, seeking to unite what is separated in the world. The power that unites heart with heart, soul with soul, life with life, culture with culture, race with race, nation with nation. Aloha is the power that can reunite when a quarrel has brought separation.

Aloha is an attitude of the heart, the desire to promote the true good of other people in a friendly spirit, out of a sense of kinship. Aloha seeks to do good, with no conditions attached. We do not do good only to those who do good to us. Aloha welcomes the stranger and seeks the good of the stranger. Aloha loves even when the love is not returned. And such is the love of God, the Great Spirit.

Aloha does not exploit a people or keep them in ignorance and subservience. Aloha shares the sorrows and joys of people. From the beginning, all humankind has been called into being, nourished, watched over by the love of God, the Great Spirit. Aloha is the Golden Rule. Aloha is the spirit of God the Great Spirit at work in you and me and in the world, uniting what is separated, overcoming darkness and death, bringing new light and life to all who sit in the darkness of fear, guiding humankind in the way of peace.

Word of God response:

1. Remember a time when you felt the Aloha Spirit – it could be a time spent in Hawaii, or some other place. Share this experience with your table group.
2. Write a blessing for the world, for your family, or for yourself, and roll it up and place into a shell as provided on your table. We will collect and pray over them.

Aloha blessing:

Aloha Nui Loa (With much love)
Malama Pono (Take care of yourself)
A Hui Hou Kakou (Until we meet again)