

Jubilee Homily 2023
Sister Mary Diez

In the name of the 2023 Jubilarians, thank you, our dear sisters and associates, family, friends, and especially Father Alan Veik, for joining us today!

As Sister Felicia noted in her introduction to this Mass, Jubilee is a new beginning, a celebration of our becoming new each day. She used the image of *kintsugi*, the art form that takes broken pieces and binds them together with gold or platinum. The process is a metaphor that tells us how brokenness can be turned into something precious.

There is a similar message in the readings chosen by the Jubilarians for this day. Isaiah reminds us to live in the present – the ever-new moment where God is building a road in the desert and setting rivers to flow in the wasteland.

These are beautiful images for how we are called to live each day – opening paths to love and bringing the compassion of God to those who are suffering. It suggests that what we celebrate as Jubilarians today is not numbers or years, nor accomplishments of the past, but how the Gospel of Christ is living in us now. We celebrate what is ever present and ever new: The love of God that is at work in us.

The reading from the first letter of John comes at this theme of love in another way: Because God first loved us, we must have the same love for one another. Only in that way does God dwell in us. Only in that way can we be witnesses to God's love in the world.

Our *Response in Faith* expresses this idea in Principle III, where we say “Christ is our bond as we strive for union with God, with each other, and with all that surrounds us and awaits transformation.” In other words, the two great commandments, love of God and love of neighbor – extended to include Mother Earth and all of God's creation – are brought together in one love. It's as though a *kintsugi* progress uses love as the gold that binds everything together in union.

In today's Gospel we get a more concrete sense of what the union with God, living in us, makes present.

First, this Gospel helps us to see the reality of union: Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst. By our commitment in community, we become not only witnesses to God's love, but God truly becomes present in the world through us.

Second, this Gospel helps us to see a more concrete image of presence: We are called to become the face of God's mercy, compassion, and forgiveness to others. This is the 70 times seven that Matthew reports. It is the daily challenge of community life and service to God's people – that our love leads us to see both our own vulnerability and the vulnerability of others with a charity that is stronger than judgment. It is what leads us to lift others

up and to accept a helping hand when we are in need. As Thomas Merton said, “What the world needs most is persons whose lives are grounded in the love of Christ and who can communicate the reality of that love.”

It is this healing, forgiving, unifying love at work in us that we celebrate as Jubilarians on this new day. It is through healing and being healed, forgiving and being forgiven, that we are united and share our witness to God’s love with our world.

Happy Jubilee!