

I'm sure you are already aware of these things,  
but isn't it remarkable that we share 99% of our DNA with chimpanzees and bonobos...  
that we, our bodies and all of creation: other animals, fish, mountains, flowers,  
pumpkins, cows are literally made up of stardust...  
Isn't it remarkable that the air we breathe  
contains molecules of different host of substances that were  
breathed in and out by the disciples of Jesus.....  
Isn't it remarkable that the fluttering of a butterfly's wings in Minneapolis  
can effect the weather in Indonesia...  
Isn't it remarkable that  
On any given day right here in Palos Park,  
someone is driving a car made in Germany....  
sipping coffee grown in Guatemala,  
wearing clothes made in Pakistan,  
talking on a phone made in china,  
and skypeing their daughter who is working in Chile.

All of this reality begs us to reconsider once again just who is our neighbor  
because in our reading today,  
Jesus responds to the question of which is the greatest commandment,  
by equating love of God with love of neighbor ...  
So what *does* his command mean in light of the world that we live in?  
mmmmm.....

To begin, we need to hear the commandment as it is written:

**“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”.**

Not... “You shall love your neighbor AS MUCH as yourself.”

One problem with our understanding this command is that  
most of the time we don't hear it the way it is written!

Most of the time we hear it as affirming our need to

deal with our poor self esteem, to do our own inner work,  
first, before we extend ourselves to others.

And there is a measure of truth to that.

We do need to do our inner work, to deal with our issues  
because if we don't, often times we project our 'stuff' onto others...  
but that is not what Jesus is talking about here and now...

He didn't say, Love your neighbor as much as yourself  
in order to encourage us to first address our inner work...

He said, Love your neighbor AS yourself....

because he, realized way ahead of any of our scientific discoveries,  
that truly we are indeed all "one".

We...all of creation... are truly interconnected...

that the boundaries we put between ourselves and others  
be they boundaries of race or nationality or religion,  
are superficial boundaries.

Jesus understood this 2,000+ years ago...

and all great mystics in all the traditions have understand this from the beginning of time,  
and now, today science is making visible their wisdom....

Our contemporary lifestyles with technology and the internet and global commerce and  
international education and universal economic contingencies...  
are making visible the porousness of national boundaries...

Our emotional reactions to the events around the globe,  
from Ebola to birth of Prince Charles of England  
give evidence of our interconnectedness to people everywhere....

We now know that all of reality is energy moving at a wide variety of speeds...

**What we see as physical boundaries are really permeable membranes...**

**For instance, think about how you can be in a really good mood  
and out of the clear blue, someone walks into the room who is really angry...  
Most of the time, in a flash! your good mood is gone, you don't even know why  
and you can feel...in your body, their anger has become yours...**

**It has always been spiritual truism  
and now we are beginning to understand it to be a physical,  
biological, chemical one as well:  
There is no where on this planet that we can go that we are not affected  
by what is happening everywhere else...  
If anyone is suffering...we all suffer.  
If anyone is oppressed, we are all oppressed...**

**Hence the wisdom of Jesus....  
if all of the above is even remotely or slightly true...  
then the opposite is true as well....**

**When compassion is shown to anyone anywhere...  
it benefits us all....  
When the homeless man is fed,  
when the child is loved,  
when the woman knows safety and security...  
we all feel better, we all... on some deep level....  
feel more secure, more satiated, more loved...  
This ancient and new wisdom is the key to true happiness...  
Let us not get sucked into drawing old, divisive boundaries...  
Let us not devolve into a me verses them come uppance...  
because it does none of us any good....**

**Jesus knew this.**

**That is why he placed such a strong emphasis on Love of God and Love of neighbor, so strong, in fact, that he bound them together as the basis for all Law and Tradition...**

**When we keep these two commandments in mind and listen to his other teachings it all begins to make sense.**

**Jesus wasn't trying to create a new religion, and he wasn't just trying to help people follow the commandments better, he wasn't teaching the usual tit for tat, but he was trying to raise people's consciousness...**

**he was and is desperately trying to teach us how to expand and raise our hearts and minds and our lives into Yahweh's understanding of Love he was trying to help us to believe and to trust that we are all called into the Consciousness of the Reign of Heaven on Earth ....**

**So, with all that in mind, with the ancient Wisdom teachings of Jesus and all the new scientific understandings that we have been given...**

**Let us consider the needs of the four footed creatures, the winged creatures, the swimming creatures for they are our kin and relations as well.**

**Let us make room for the trees and the rivers, the mountains and the valleys, for indeed they are extensions of our bodies, ...**

**Let us remember that Love is the ground of all creation: human and non human, for that is who God is, was, and ever shall be.**

**Let us remember, and trust and celebrate that there is more than enough Love to go around..... and then some...**

for that is the true meaning of Faith...

Let us never forget that we are indeed all “One”:

God and neighbor and you and me and us and them...

Let us never forget to say Thank You....Amen.