

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

5th Sunday of Easter | For Sunday, May 19th, 2019

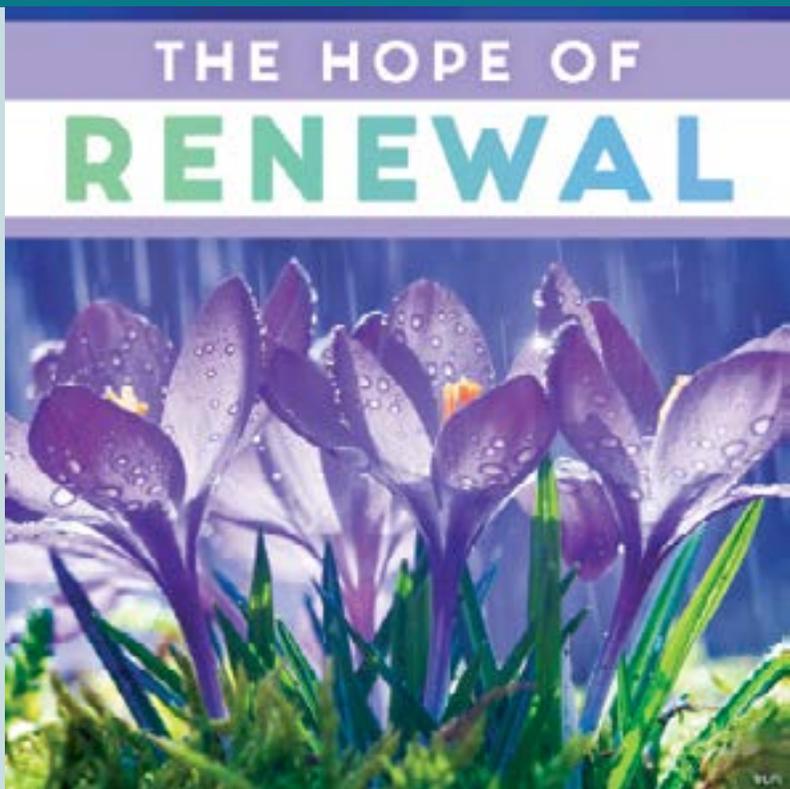
## Renewed by the Love of Christ

*Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

**Acts 14:21-27**

**Revelations 21:1-5a**

**John 13:31-33a, 34-35**



Most of us live in homes that could probably use some renovating.

The word “renovate” means “to make new.” However, we cannot make our houses brand new unless we totally tear down and rebuild them. No matter how much work is done, we will, in most cases, still have the same foundation, joists, and studs. Also, whatever work we do to our homes will need to be repeated in a few years. Eventually, we will have to repaint, replace the heating system, or fix the appliances.

Not only do our homes need renovating, but every aspect of our lives and our world. Our minds and spirits need education and prayer to grow in knowledge and love. Our society is in constant need of change to be more just and peaceful. And our Church requires ongoing conversion to be a more effective instrument of Christ’s presence and power. The task of renewal — of being made new — never ends.

Who is the one who has the power to change us? Who can shake the dust off our old habits? Who can clear out the cobwebs of bitterness and replace the rotted out places in our hearts?

No one but Jesus.

In this [Sunday's second reading](#), John sees a new heaven and a new earth. The sea, symbolic of chaos and violence, is no more. On the new earth, people are living in peace. The landscape has been healed of the scars of pollution. The centerpiece, however, is the new Jerusalem which descends from heaven. This new Jerusalem is the Church purified from sin and glowing with holiness. Every tear is wiped away. All people live as sisters and brothers. It is a brand-new start for all of God’s creation — a total renovation from the foundation to the rooftop — stemming from the power of God made manifest in Jesus, our risen Lord.

Therefore, he can proclaim from his throne in heaven, "See, I make all things new."

How does Jesus make all things new? Our reading from the Gospel of John tells us. Speaking to his disciples during the Last Supper, he tells them that all he has taught can be summed up in one commandment, "Love one another." The love that Jesus commands is no warm feeling of affection expressing itself in hugs and kisses. Rather, he commands them to love one another as he has loved them — by dying on the cross. Jesus is the only hope of renewal for us individually, for the Church, and for the world. And he accomplishes that transformation through a love willing to sacrifice even to the point of death.

All of us have some area of our lives that needs healing and renewal. We will encounter continual failure and frustration in facing those problems if we do not bring Jesus and his love into the situation.

The home renovations business is a multi-billion dollar industry. Imagine if we could have the same interest in renewing our families as we have in renovating our homes. Imagine if we could work as hard at repairing broken relationships as we do at repairing our leaky roofs. Imagine if we were as concerned about replacing bitterness with forgiveness as we are with replacing our laminate countertops with granite. Then our world would undergo a real and lasting renewal marked by the love of Christ.

*Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

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## PRAYER

Glory to you,  
O Lord our God,  
Your love calls us to be your people.  
By sharing our many and diverse gifts  
we share in your mission.  
We ask you, Lord,  
to shape us into a community of faith.  
Nourish us by your word and sacraments  
that we may grow into the image of Jesus.  
Through the power of your Holy Spirit,  
heal us that we, in turn,  
may heal the wounded.  
Form us to be instruments of love,  
justice, and peace in our land,  
and send us to proclaim your saving work.  
Renew us, Lord,  
that we may renew the face of the earth.  
Amen.

— [Prayer for Renew](#)