

From Jean Hall

Although the Covid pandemic means that I will not be able to do an in-person presentation this October, as scheduled, I will be able to come to you through the wonders of technology. Beginning October 1, you can watch my presentation by using the link to the Resurrection Parish website: www.resurrectionfamilies.org

Following my talk, If you have questions or requests for more information on the topic I present, you can submit them to me by email -- jhall80@juno.com by October 25. Based on your questions and requests, I will prepare another presentation. Watch for the announcement of the date for that possible presentation.

The title for my October talk is "From Separation to Unity." Using the story of our Israelite ancestors and the teachings of both Jesus and sages from other cultures, I will show how these wise ancestors taught us how to make the journey from separation to unity, from an "us and them" way of thinking and living, to one of compassion and realization of our oneness.

A pandemic has invaded our world. This world of ours is also severely fractured from violence, war and poverty. We are separated into "us and them" by color, culture, political position and wealth. However, just as Mark proclaims in his gospel: "The veil in the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom," we aim to see and believe in the possibility that in our own time the veil of separation can be torn in two.

Reflecting on the teaching of Jesus that "the kingdom of God is near," and "the kingdom of God is within you," we hope to come to an understanding that Jesus means that this kingdom includes everyone. Just as Jesus welcomed everyone, including those judged as "sinners" by the so-called "holy ones," anyone who claims to be Christian, needs to hear and accept Jesus' challenge to love and accept even our enemies.

Leaving behind the split into "us and them", we can become a community where, as members, we do not see each other as better or less than ourselves. Rather, we will see others **AS** ourselves. Old Testament prophets like Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel understood and taught this. Sages like the Buddha, Confucius and Socrates came to this same conclusion and called their followers to treat others **AS** themselves. Jesus welcomed everyone and taught us to love others **AS** ourselves. Later wise persons such as Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela cut through the veil of separation and taught us that by non violence and respect for the sacred value of each person we will treat others **AS** ourselves.

It is time to split the veil of separation in two from top to bottom. Together, we can begin the task by putting on the mind of Christ, abandoning the "us and them" mindset and working for the oneness for which Jesus prayed: "Father, may they be one just as we are one." (John 17.11)