

In 1837, the third and final installment of the works of Hans Christian Andersen was published in Copenhagen. And so, alongside the well-known work “The Little Mermaid” another story was also published.

In this other story, we hear of a vain emperor who cares about nothing except wearing the finest clothes. He is drawn in by two swindlers who promise him the finest and best suit of clothes from a magical fabric which is invisible to those who are unfit for their jobs or else are hopelessly stupid.

Neither the emperor nor his staff can see the magical clothes - but they all remain silent for fear of being outed as unfit for their positions.

The swindlers play at making the suit, and mime dressing the emperor. Finally, the emperor marches down the street to show off his finest to the townspeople. They, too, play along - not wanted to appear stupid or unfit; until a child who is too young to be afraid of appearing stupid blurts out that the emperor isn't wearing any clothes.

Andersen's tale titled, “The Emperor's New Clothes” focused on the pride of the self-important and the intellectual vanity of the over-educated. In a sense, it is an exposé on the hypocrisy and snobbery which so often flavors behaviors in polite society.

In today's Second Reading from St. John's Apocalypse, also known as the Book of Revelation (no 's'), we hear of a “new heaven” and a “new earth;” as well as the “new Jerusalem.” We are told that God's dwelling is among us, and that the old order had passed away.

The key statement, and one which we can take to heart, is when the One who sits on the throne - namely God in Jesus Christ - declares: “Behold, I make all things new.”

In the Gospel, we are back in the upper room on Holy Thursday. Judas has departed, and Jesus is teaching the eleven about the glory that is to come. The glory - not perhaps what the disciples are expecting - namely the glory of the Cross.

And in the midst of this discourse, Our Lord gives them “*a new commandment: love one another.*” Adding to this: “*As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.*”

Most assuredly, Jesus is speaking of His Cross. And this is not ordinary love. This is the Divine Trinitarian love which exists among the Persons of

the Most Holy Trinity. We are called to no longer do things like regular people, but rather ... through God's grace ... we are to love as God loves.

And so, why don't we do this? I would propose that it is because we have all suffered the same fate as the emperor in Andersen's fable. We have been swindled too often regarding what is new and what is love; what we are to do; who we are supposed to be; and what we are supposed to say ... that we are lost as to what God is calling us to do in His new commandment.

And the reason we have been so swindled, is because in order to love as God loves ... in order to embrace and practice this new commandment ... well, the bottom-line is - it's just plain hard. Not only is it difficult, but it's nearly impossible ... unless we take Jesus seriously in our lives ... and unless we rely on His grace and His mercy to form us into something ... someone ... who is completely "new."

In order to become the people we are called to be ... called by Christ ... to live in Christ ... we have to be willing to let go of everything ... everything that is not from God ... everything that takes us away from God's love.

And this is not easy. In fact, for everyone ... this is very hard.

St. Paul says it best in today's First Reading when he tells us: "*It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.*"

Are we ready ... are we willing ... to embrace God's call on our lives ... Are we willing to allow God to "*make all things new*" ... "*all things*" ... everything ... in our hearts and in our minds ... our bodies and our souls.

Can we ... Will we allow God's grace ... and God's mercy ... and God's infinite love ... to transform us ... right now ... today ... and every day?

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us ask Him for the courage to let Him ... make us all new. Let us receive from this altar the infinite graces ... the transforming graces ... so that we might constantly live in His mercy ... and go from this place as beacons of His divine love.

*"My [brothers and sisters],*

*[Jesus has given us] a new commandment: love ... one ... another.*

*As [He has] loved [us], so [we] also should love one another.*

*This is how all will know that [we] are [Jesus'] disciples, if [we] have love for one another."*