

UNLESS

Unless is a word that shapes our history, consciously or unconsciously, personally, locally or even nationally.

It starts early in life.

UNLESS, I am captain, I will not play.

UNLESS, everybody pays up, I will not contribute to ...

It can disrupt industrial relations

UNLESS seniority has precedence, we will not

It can even decide who will govern the country

UNLESS we get the Minister of Justice job, we will not ...

UNLESS can create a Berlin Wall in communities and even in families.

Always underlying the word unless, there is a threat, real or imaginary, powerful or aspirational.

Sometimes the threat may be justified

UNLESS you wear a mask, I will not serve you.

But more often the underlying threat is caused by fear, ignorance or selfishness. Unless is an attitude of mind and heart that can stunt growth in our appreciation of friendship, of community and even of love itself.

Sometimes the unless attitude marks a failure to take on responsibility for one's own actions or omissions. This is certainly true of doubting Thomas as we read in Sunday's Gospel, where he declares unequivocally

"UNLESS I see the holes that the nails have made in His hands and put my fingers in the hole and UNLESS I put my hand into His side, I refuse to believe."



Rather, than committing himself

to belief in the Resurrection, he threatened to abandon ship unless Jesus met his requests. Jesus accommodated the Thomas unlessees. As a result, both were winners.

What unless demands block me from similar rewards, human and divine? What blocks me from responding to the good inspirations God sows in my heart? Surrender one "unless attitude" this week and experience the growth in inner peace.

Believe in the power of love to forgive, to heal, to enable new beginnings, to nourish friendships personally and with God.



May the Spirit of God, be upon us this Easter time.

Fr. Tom Clancy