

Sunday, 2nd May 2010 - 5th Sunday of Easter

"Love one another, as I have loved you"

Reading 1: Acts 14:21-27
Reading 2: Rev 21:1-5a

Responsorial Psalm : Ps 145:8-13
Gospel : Jn 13:31-35

Scripture: *John 13:31-35*

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; 32 if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Meditation: If you knew you were about to die, what wisdom would you impart to your loved ones in your final moments? What's most important for them to learn from you?

In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus knows that his time is short. The first thing he says to his friends is words of praise for God (the Father) while equating himself with God. He even calls his friends "children" as if he himself is God the Father! In so doing, he makes it clear that he is one with the Father – so totally one that the lines between Father and Savior are blurred. And he does it humbly. He could have said, "Hey guys, in case you're not sure, I am divine. I am God. Worship me." But instead, he focuses on the glory of God.

Glory is the radiating light of God's presence: his love, his joy, his holiness, his peace, his wisdom, his creativity, and everything else that he imparts on those who want to bathe in his glory. When we glorify God, we are reflecting back to him this same glory. How much of this glory is illuminating your life?

After describing the exchange of glory between Father and Son, Jesus imparts on his disciples the highest wisdom of the universe: The key to successfully joining Jesus in the glory of God is to love as he loves.

Love is not love unless it unselfishly gives itself to others. Jesus unselfishly gave himself to us completely, even in death. Followers of Jesus are not true followers, disciples are not true disciples, priests are not true priests, lay leaders are not true leaders, unless they serve with love, in love, and through love.

The glory of God is love that gives itself completely, even sacrificially. Why does the Gospel reading give us a scene from the Passion of Christ while we're celebrating the season of Easter? The other readings are full of Easter: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5a). And yet here is Jesus preparing for betrayal, torture, and death. Why?

This Gospel reading is Jesus imparting to us today the key to continuing the mission of sharing God's glory, which Jesus began and now calls us to do. By loving one another in a spirit of sacrifice, we are showing the world that Jesus is real, he is risen, and he is alive in us.

Questions for community faith sharing:

Whom do you not love? Is there anyone you find difficult to love? If you were able to give that person a gift of yourself as an act of love for the glory of God, would you do it?

How does an act of love glorify God? Is there anyone that God has been asking you to bring His love to? How would you bring God's love to that person?

How do you remind yourself or one another (in church, in your family or circle of friends) of God's love and His new commandment (i.e. to love one another)?

"Lord Jesus, your love has no bounds and your obedience to the Father reverses the curse of our disobedience. May I bring you glory in the sacrifice of my will to the will of the Father and in my love and compassion for others, both for those who treat me well and for those who cause me grief or harm."