

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

When Judas had gone out from the upper room, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Although our Gospel takes us back to Holy Thursday, to the Last Supper, we must read it in the light of the Resurrection. In giving his final instructions to the disciples before his death, Jesus emphasizes that his passion is bound up with his glory. In John's Gospel, the whole of the passion narrative is shaped to stress, that far from defeat, Jesus reigns from the cross. Only faith can perceive this mystery, a mystery which is perpetuated in the Eucharist.

Jesus' Command to love, as he has loved, is given unparalleled solemnity. It comes after Jesus has knelt to wash his disciples' feet & before the crucifixion. Here, there is a clear standard to follow: to love unconditionally, with no restrictions. But this is not all. Jesus' love is rooted in love of the Father & so reveals the Father to us. Christian love has a mystical dimension. It is a participation; a sharing in the life of God himself. Understanding this, gives meaning & purpose to everything we do!

"These words of Jesus: Love one another, just as I have loved you, should be not only a light to us, but they should also be a flame consuming the selfishness which prevents the growth of holiness... This love must come from within, from our union with Christ... Loving must be as normal to us as living and breathing..."

(Saint Teresa of Calcutta)

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year C

18th May 2025

"Love One Another, Just As I Have Loved You"



It's the Fifth Sunday of Easter, but our Gospel takes us back to the Last Supper (John 13). There is so much to take in. Jesus has washed his disciple's feet. Judas' treachery has been foretold and shortly afterwards, he slips away into the darkness. This marks the beginning of Jesus' passion & what follows is Jesus's final instructions to his disciples. Notice how he begins: "Now has the Son of Man has been glorified." It is his heavenly Father who glorifies Jesus. And he is given glory, not for reasons of power or domination, but for love. It is precisely through emptying himself & seeking the way of his Father, the way of love, that Jesus is exalted. It is in this context that Jesus teaches a new commandment: *"Love one another as I have loved you."* This command is an invitation to share in the Father's life. We must love, not just because it makes us feel good or helps others out, but we must love because it is a participation in God's life.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal.

Acts 14:21-27

In those days: Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch from their first missionary journey. Notice how the Apostles organize the local churches: following the pattern of the Jewish communities, they appoint elders and then report back to their own communities. At this time there is no priestly structure. All have received the Holy Spirit and all share the responsibility of proclaiming the Good News. Notice how the Apostles seek to strengthen the spirit of the disciples and exhort them to persevere in the faith.

Psalm 145(144):8-9. 10-11. 12-13b

*The LORD is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in mercy.
How good is the LORD to all, compassionate to all his creatures.*

*All your works shall thank you, O LORD, and all your faithful ones bless you.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign, and declare your mighty deeds.*

To make known your might to the whole human race, and the glorious splendour of your reign. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule endures for all generations.

Revelation 21:1-5a

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.' And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'

The faith of the Early Church is strengthened in our Second Reading, when John shares his vision of the end times. Notice, the re-creation of the universe: the old order has passed away, the battle ground of good and evil; the Sea, the formidable abyss, symbol of all dangers, is no more. Now the universe opens for the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God and his people. Death has passed with the old order. It is no more. This City, is not of human making - it descends from heaven.

Alleluia, alleluia! A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Alleluia!

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that, as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.

Prayer after Communion

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life.