

6th Sunday of Easter, Year B

GOSPEL

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Jesus said to his disciples:

'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.
If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's will and remain in his love.
I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and
your joy be complete.
This is my commandment:
Love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.
You are my friends, if you do as I command you.
I shall not call you servants any more,
because a servant does not know his master's business;
I call you friends, because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me, no, I choose you;
and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit
that will last;
and then the Father will give you anything you ask in my name.
What I command you is to love one another.'

(John 15:9-17)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

In John's Gospel, there is no account of the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. Instead there is the account of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, an act of absolute service to others, and a long discourse of instruction on how they must conduct themselves in the future. This is known as the 'Farewell Discourse' and part of it is read this Sunday and next week.

EXPLORING THE WORD

The heart of today's gospel lies in Jesus repeating himself: 'Love one another'. The model for this love is the love that Jesus showed towards all those who follow him. Jesus has changed the way in which God relates to human beings. We are no longer servants of God but are drawn into deep intimacy and friendship through the Son. This new relationship is not dependent on our choice or will. God has chosen us, and we are now commissioned to bear fruit, fruit that will last. The Christian command to love is not a vague feeling of good will; it is a love that suffers all, and may demand great sacrifice. The command to love as Jesus loved may be the most difficult test of our Christianity. This is how the presence of Jesus is experienced even in his absence.

- You could discuss some examples of people who have laid down their lives for others, such as St Maximilian Kolbe or St Oscar Romero.
- How are we called 'to lay down our life for our friends' in our daily existence?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- When have you experienced complete joy? What or who brought that sensation on for you?
- Have you ever found that love is a costly and demanding emotion?
- What does it mean to love one another as Christ loved us?
- With your entry into the Church, you too have been commissioned to go out and bear fruit. How are you feeling about this now? Are there any difficulties or struggles? Discuss your experiences so far.
- Relate in special ways of openness with friends this week.
- Today's entrance antiphon makes a lovely reflection for the week:

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the earth: the Lord has freed his people,

