

As Simple as it Gets...It's Still Hard

5th Sunday of Easter – April 24, 2016

The directive given to us this week by Jesus **“As I have loved you, so you also should love one another”** is really quite simple. So why does this teaching of our faith always seem so hard to accomplish? Why is it easy to love some but not always all persons? Is it them? Or is it me? Am I unable to grasp the very essence of this week's gospel message?

We are now well into the Easter Season and the gospel of John. Jesus' resurrection has been celebrated. If one looks, this week's gospel appears as part of Jesus' farewell discourse at the Last Supper. It actually takes place before the crucifixion and the resurrection. So why would the Church place this particular selection of scripture on this 5th Sunday of Easter?

John is recounting for his community the message that Jesus has for his disciples. This message is his message of love. This is the same love we heard about last week with the good shepherd. It is the same love that challenged Peter two weeks ago.

The love that Jesus is referring to is the love that he has modeled for them throughout his time with them. This is the love reflected in the washing of the feet, the feeding of the poor, and the care for the least. It is a love that is for the other. It is a love that lays down one's life, comfort, busyness or personal agenda with the understanding that, if I am a Christian, my life is no longer mine. Rather my life belongs to Christ. I give up “me” in place of the name Christian. God is glorified through the one sacrifice given by Jesus. Jesus' sacrifice is reflected (or not reflected) in how I treat my brothers and sisters.

So my challenge goes back to why I might struggle on some days to reflect Jesus' love of the other. My best reflection is that some days I'm pretty selfish. Some days I'm more about me than I am about Christ. Some days, I just don't want the hassle...It's hard to be a Christian every day. I believe this behavior is what is referred to as sin.

This is why we need to continue to hear the message of Jesus' love in the gospel. This is why we need Fr. Jack or Deacon Mike or Deacon Ed to open up the scriptures for us. I think most of us need to hear this message over and over so as to put it into practice, especially when we fail to live the love proclaimed by Christ.

We need to receive the Body and the Blood of Christ every week, thereby remembering Jesus' sacrificial offering of self for us. On my part, I (we) need to continually pray, reflect and grow towards the vision that Jesus has for us, **“I give you a new commandment: love one another.”** As simple as it is.. I'm still a work in progress.

Happy Easter,


Sue Schettler