

May 25th, 2025

6th Sunday of Easter – Year C

The Love of Jesus – Jn 14:23-29

For readings ... see [here](#).

Last Sunday and today we hear Jesus teaching us about love. Father had a wonderful homily last Sunday unpacking Jesus' teaching on love ... as shown to us in St John's Gospel and elsewhere in scripture and over the ages. Whether you heard or not, I encourage you to read it again ... it is [posted on our website](#) (spanish version [here](#)) ... or ask for a copy and we will get one for you.

Now today, we just heard Jesus say, "*whoever loves me will keep **my word**.*" Jn 14:23 What does Jesus mean here? To answer that question, let's step back and look at what is happening and when. We are again in St John's Gospel where Jesus' is at the Last Supper, teaching about love right before His brutal crucifixion, death, and resurrection.... In fact, this is just before the agony in the garden.

During the Last Supper, Jesus washed the disciple's feet and said to his disciples that they should do the same. Imagine how filthy their feet must have been. Maybe that's why Peter reacted the way he did saying, "*You will never wash my feet.*" Jn 13:8 But Jesus was showing them how to love ... as he *instructed* Peter, "*Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.*" And so, Peter succumbs to the disgust of having his Lord and master wash his filthy feet.

Then, Jesus gave them the **Great Commandment** ... that they should **love one another as He showed them**. Jesus, at the Last Supper, is continuing and emphasizing and clarifying his teachings ... his word ... with a specific focus ... that we must love God and love neighbor... that is how we keep his word.

In the same discourse ... a bit later ... Jesus again stresses this love, when he explains in His beautiful words, "*As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, "I have told you this so that my joy*

*may be in you and your joy may be complete ... **No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.***" Jn 15:9-13 Now consider how Jesus says this the day before he is brutally tortured and crucified. His teaching wasn't placed this way at the Last Supper by accident.

Yes, there is no greater love, than to put it all on the line ... our entire life ... for one's friends, country, family, and of course, for Jesus and His Church. This is our call and here we are on Memorial Day weekend ... remembering those who have done that very thing ... to protect us by serving.

Other professions also potentially lay down their lives. We think of police officers and firefighters who go to work and also risk their lives to save and protect others. It is more than just a job ... **if it is done with love.**

And, there are others who sacrifice their entire lives, too, ... they lay it on the line ... mothers and fathers who put their lives at the service of their families. They give up so much, especially if and when they become parents ... dealing with illnesses, sleep deprivation, conflicts, and their desires that **must be sacrificed** for the good of their children, their family, and spouse. But, as Jesus said ... about laying down our entire lives for others, *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."* True, sacrificial love aligned with Christ, brings us a deep, inner joy. Good, faithful, loving parents know this.

Priests and religious also lay down their worldly lives and sacrifice so much ... for love of God and Neighbor. They respond to Jesus' words we heard today ... by loving Jesus and listening and following his word.

Now, I'm not saying that every fallen soldier, or police officer, or every parent, or priest or deacon is truly laying down their life in the love Jesus is talking about. There can be false or ulterior motives ... like power or hatred or sinful desires that lead one to lay down their life, instead of love. A soldier could enlist because of a strong desire to kill or a police officer could seek employment to have power over others. And some people get married for love of money or other desires ... instead of true, sacrificial love.

We turn to St Paul's letter to the Corinthians for a clarification. He writes that people have all kinds of talents, charisms, and vocations. But not everyone has the same talents or vocations or gifts ... some of which are the "*the greatest spiritual gifts.*" Then he writes: "*But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues **but do not have love**, I am a resounding **gong** or a **clashing cymbal**. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, **I am nothing**. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast ... but do not have love, I gain nothing.*" 1 Cor 12:28-13

The same can be said for parents, military personnel, civil servants, clergy, ... anyone doing anything ... if we aren't following Jesus' word ... doing things with true love that comes from Christ Jesus ... we are failing. The key is that things must be done with the love of Christ ... with a focus on seeking the good of the other ... with charity... as Father explained so well last week.

Here is a quote of some wonderful words from St Augustine: "*Anyone can bless himself with the sign of the cross of Christ: anyone can answer 'Amen'; anyone can sing Alleluia; anyone can be baptized, enter churches, build the walls of basilicas. But the only thing that distinguishes the children of God is charity. Those who practice charity are born of God; those who do not practice it are not born of God. It is indeed an important sign, an essential difference. No matter what you have, if you do not have this one thing, everything else is of no avail; and if you lack everything, and have nothing else but charity, then you have kept the law.*"

So let us always think ... as we do whatever we do ... what is our motive and how are we doing what we are doing? Are we focused on love or are we being selfish? When we are upset and aren't getting our way, what is our goal? Is it this love Jesus teaches us? Or are we caught in some earthly desire instead?

Let us all keep vigilant and grow through prayer to stay close to Jesus and allow his love to penetrate us and overtake us ... so we can all love the way Christ taught ... so *“that Jesus’ joy may be in us and our joy may be complete!”* ... *AMEN*