

6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48; 1 Jn 4:7-10; Jn 15:9-17

Today's readings say that those who believe in Christ are to obey his commandment of love – "*Love others as I have loved you.*" When we celebrate Mother's Day, next week, let us remember with gratitude that it is generally our mothers who practice the *agápe* love of Jesus

In the first reading, Peter teaches us that God shows no partiality in His love and that there are no boundaries to abiding in love. God loves everyone, and He wants everyone to be saved through His son, Jesus. That is why, God welcomed the Roman centurion Cornelius as the first non-Jew to become a Christian. The reading tells us how God also allowed the Gentiles, who heard Peter's speech to receive the same Holy Spirit and His gifts that Peter's Jewish audience had received on the day of Pentecost.

In the second reading, John defines God as love and explains that, He expressed His love for mankind by sending His son to die for us "*as expiation for our sins.*" This Divine love, gives us the command as well as duty to love one another, as we have been loved by God. Since God has loved us first, we need to love God in return, love ourselves and love one another. Jesus' unconditional, forgiving, selfless, sacrificial love for us must be the criterion of our love for others. The highest expression of this love is our willingness to lay down our lives as Jesus did, for people who don't deserve it.

Let us cultivate an abiding and loving friendship with Jesus: a) The qualities, we normally expect from our friends are trust, mutuality, faithfulness, equality, forgiveness, joy and sacrifice. Jesus offers us, all these qualities in our friendship with him. b) As a friend, Jesus has trusted us by sharing with us everything that he has heard from his Father. So, we have to trust him as a friend, by listening to him by reading the Bible and talking to him by prayer. c) As our friend, Jesus will be always faithful to us. Let us return this fidelity by being faithful to him in doing His will. d) By calling us his friends, Jesus makes us equal to him. Let us be proud of this and lead lives worthy of our unique

status. e) As an understanding friend, Jesus is ready to forgive us time and again. Let us also forgive those who offend us. f) As a friend, Christ has told us everything so that our joy might be complete in him. Let us enjoy Jesus' Divine friendship. g) Jesus declared that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for a friend. He has done it for us. So, let us also love others unconditionally.

Let us be persons for others: Jesus demonstrated the love of God, his Father, has for us, by living for us and dying for us. So, as his disciples, we are to be persons for others, sacrificing our time, talents and lives for others. This is what, parents spontaneously do for their children, by sacrificing themselves, their time, talents, health and wealth for them. That is, they "spend" themselves for their children. The most effective way of communicating God's love to others is by treating everyone as a friend, giving each, the respect he or she deserves as a human being. In moments of trial and stress, when people are hostile or ungrateful and we feel the pull of bitter resentment in our hearts, it is important for us to remember that Christ's own love was not limited to the people he liked. So, we should close our minds to thoughts of revenge.

Prayer

Jesus, our Lord and Master, you continually command us, in every situation to imitate the qualities of your love towards us. Give us the grace to translate your example of caring, sharing, serving, forgiving and sacrificial love in action. We totally depend on your supernatural grace to do something which is naturally so hard for us. Grant that we may not give chance to the temptations of arguments, divisions and bitterness within our community. We ask your pardon for the times, we failed to give witness to you by our weaknesses, failures and temptations. Amen.