

REFLECTION FOR SUNDAY 6TH WEEK OF EASTER

Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48 1John 4:7-10 John15:9-17.

“No one taught me what love looks like.”

When she said that, I was shocked and so listened more attentively. I was watching a TV show, in which a 28year old woman was being interviewed. She had grown up in a single parent household. Her biological father never took responsibility for her – her mother was addicted to narcotics. After her mother’s death, this young woman went into a series of foster homes, some of which were abusive. In her desperate search for love, she became promiscuous at a young age. She became pregnant, had an abortion, and turned to drugs herself.

Then she met a minister who worked exclusively with addicted young adults, and her life began to change. She fell in love with the Lord. She began the healing process. And, as she looked back on her early years, she realized that no one had been a role model for her. No one showed her how to care and love. As she said on the TV show, “No one taught me what love looks like.”

Whose example of love do you follow? Whose love still inspires you? Who taught you what love looks like?

Today’s Scripture readings declare the profound truth that those who believe in Christ are to obey his commandment of love – *“Love one another as I have loved you.”*

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, both the Jews and the Gentiles, 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.

Today’s Responsorial Psalm (Ps 98) also directs our attention toward God’s marvellous love and kindness in offering salvation to the whole world.

In the second reading, John defines God as love and explains that He expressed His love for us by sending His Son to die for us. This Divine love gives us the duty to love one another as we have been loved by God.

As we listen to Jesus’ beautiful words about love in today’s Gospel reading, it is crucial for us to remember the context within the narrative of John’s Gospel.

Here in Chapter 15 of John’s Gospel, Jesus and his friends are gathered at the table for the Last Supper. Judas has already made up his mind to betray Jesus. This is the last time that Jesus will sit at table with those whom he loved.

What does love look like when you’ve been betrayed?

What does love look like when you know that you’re going to die?

What does love look like when the people you've been so good to seem to be letting you down, and the world you came to save seems to be rejecting everything about you?

What does love look like? Love looks like Jesus, who is willing to nourish even the deepest hungers of the world. Love looks like Jesus, willing to give us the great sacrament of the Eucharist, because he knew that we would always need Him – even though we often FORGET how much we need Him.

What does love look like on the night before he died? Love looks like Jesus, stripping off his cloak, kneeling on the floor, and washing the feet of his disciples. Love looks like the master, doing the work that only servants do. Love looks like the Creator washing the feet of creatures. Love looks like the willingness to stoop down low enough to do the dirtiest task, because that is what love requires.

What does love look like in YOUR life? Could it look like patience? Patience with all of those family members.

Could love look like you always speaking the truth, standing for truth, living a life of honesty and integrity?

Could love look like forgiveness?

Could love look like your decision to say the positive words, and have a gentle tongue, when so many people are overflowing with anger?

Could love look like, in your life, YOU feeding the hungry, or helping the poor?

Could love look like, in your life, your work for justice, your defence of human life, your decision to live more simply, so that others may simply live?

Could love look like the daily tasks of parenting or spousing?

Could love look like you paying attention to the responsibilities placed in your hands?

Could love look like service?

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 even deserve it.

As Jesus' disciples, we are to be persons for others, sacrificing our time, talents, wealth, health, and lives for others.

The only failure in the life of a Christian is the failure to love.

To be able to reach out in love and to experience being loved, is God's greatest grace.

There are three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

MAY EVERYTHING WE SAY AND DO BREATHE LOVE.

Fr Patrick