

## REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup> WEEK OF EASTER

**Acts 15:7-21 John 15:9-11**

During the Last Supper discourse, Jesus teaches his disciples that love is the hallmark and the criterion of Christians.

Jesus reminds his disciples that he has chosen them as his friends with a triple mission. First, they are to love others as he has loved them. Second, they are to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Third, they are to ask God the Father for whatever they need in Jesus' name.

The criteria of Christian love: First, Jesus modifies the Old Testament command from *"love your neighbour as you love yourselves"* (Lv 19: 18) to *"love others as I have loved you."* This means that our love for others must be unconditional, forgiving, and sacrificial.

We express our love for Christ by obeying his new commandment of love. The real source of Christian joy is the certainty that God loves us. We, too, must be ready to express our love for others by our readiness to die for them as Jesus died for us.

Let us remember that true Christian love is costly and painful because it involves sacrifice on our part when we start loving the unlovable, ungrateful, and hostile people with Christ's unconditional, forgiving and sacrificial love. But our Christian call is to love others as Jesus has loved us, and as Jesus loves them.

As I heard someone once describe it, the love of Jesus is like electric current. If the current does not pass through you, it cannot enter into you. Similarly, if the love of Jesus does not pour through us to others, it is a sign that that love is not really in us. The love of God has to be recognised, responded to, and passed on. It is not just a 'given'.

And the fruit of that love is joy, the same joy that Jesus himself experiences. The normal situation of the Christian disciples should be joy.

Fr Patrick