

6th Sunday of Easter - B
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48;
I John 4:7-10;
John 15:9-17
Little Flower - 5/9/21

My Brothers and Sisters,

The Parish Staff and I want to wish all mothers and those who take the place of mothers a very happy Mother's Day. Please celebrate and enjoy your day.

Mother's Day is a day to cherish our mothers or our memories of our mothers. Today is the 34th anniversary of my mother's death. When I think of my mother, I think of her deep faith and of her willingness to make any sacrifices necessary for my brother and me.

Both today's reading from the First Letter of St. John and the Gospel passage from St. John's Gospel reveal God's love for us and the love for one another to which we are called.

The most radical statement in today's reading from First John is that God is love. The implication of this is that the more we understand God, the more we understand love, and the more we understand love, the more we understand God. St. John goes so far as to write that without love in our lives we cannot know God.

St. John also wrote that love is of God. In other words, all human love has its origin in God. God is the source of all love. Wherever there is authentic human love, that love originates in God, and, therefore, God is present in that love even when that love is imperfect. Where there is even the spark of authentic love, God is present.

According to St. John, what revealed God's love for us was that he sent his Only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. John 3:16 captures that love: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him...might have eternal life.*" Fr. René Latourelle would argue that this verse reveals not just God's love for us but his superabundant love for us. Both St. John's First Letter and John 3:16 also strongly argue that love is life giving. According to St. John, one "*who does not love is among the living dead*" [1 Jn. 3:14; NAB, 1970].

We often talk about love of God and love of others. St. John concludes by reminding us that the primary meaning of the phrase *love of God* is not our love for God but God's love for us.

Today's reading from Acts and today's Gospel offer us valuable insights into what it means to be church and additional insights into the meaning of love. Today's Gospel once again reminds us that the Church is a community of intimacy. However, in an article entitled "The Experience of Friendship," William Sadler described five qualities of friendship love found in today's Gospel. These five qualities are also essential qualities of married love.

The five qualities are joy, communion, freedom, truth, and sacrifice. Friends experience a special joy when they are together. Through self-revelation, attentive listening, caring, and shared experiences, friends become part of each other's lives. Friends call each other to be uniquely who they are, the unique individuals they are called to be. True friends speak the truth to each other and at times are called to challenge each other. True friends are willing to sacrifice for each other and their relationship.

Today's reading from Acts reminds us that the Church is called to be a community of mission. However, it also reminds us that authentic Christian love is inclusive. One of the biggest controversies in the early Church concerned the acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian community. In today's reading from Acts, Peter told Cornelius and his household, "*In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.* As Christians, our love needs to be inclusive.

My brothers and sisters, when St. John was very old, his disciples would carry him to church. Instead of giving a homily, he would simply say, "Children, love one another." His disciples eventually became impatient and finally asked why he always said the same thing. He answered, "Because it is the Lord's commandment; and if you did nothing more, it would suffice."