

Fifth Sunday of Easter



Prayer for Holding Fast to Love

God of all creation, source of all life,
you loved us into being
and sent your Son to give his life,
that we might have life in him.
You gave us the commandment
to love one another as Christ loved us.

Help us to hold fast to your command
when our will to love is overcome by fear,
greed, or the desire for power,
when we forget that your love
is living water
in the well of our souls.

Walk with us then, as we make our way
in this world.

For we desire with all our hearts
to serve you
and to be a sign of your presence to all.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

May 2, 2010
Love One Another

Of all the commandments Jesus gave to his disciples (and to us), it is the command to love one another that best expresses the mind and the spirit of a Christian. What does that mean? And how do we do it well? In another Gospel reading (Matthew 5:46-48), Jesus suggests that loving those who love us is the bare minimum for being human. Christians, knowing that they owe life itself to God's love, are challenged to love even those who are unlovable or unlovely. They are to give generously of their love even to those who do harm to them. Anchored in God's love, Christians can give without expectation of return and throw themselves into the cause of justice without fear of personal cost.

People often ask why Christianity is different from any other religion. Surely, they point out, others do good things, even great things without being Christian. That is true, but it is the command to enter into a relationship of love with everyone they meet that sets Christians apart. It is the command to see all people as brothers and sisters first and then to serve them out of that love that requires the grace that only Christ's loving sacrifice can bring. Today, ask God for the grace to be the face of Christ to all you meet and to see the face of Christ in all you meet.

This Week at Home



Monday, May 3

Feast of Saint Philip and Saint James

Philip and James (the son of Alphaeus, also known as James the lesser) were both apostles whose stories illustrate great devotion and faith in Jesus. In the Gospel according to John, Philip was among the first disciples chosen by Christ to invite others to "come and see." James was the supposed author of the letter of James in the New Testament, and according to Paul (1 Corinthians 15:7), Jesus appeared to him after the Resurrection.

Tuesday, May 4

The Gospel according to John during Easter

During Year A we hear mainly from the Gospel according to Matthew at Sunday Mass, in Year B from Mark, and in C from Luke. But the Gospel according to John is read at particular times during each year, especially during the Easter season, when we celebrate the deepest mystery of the faith: the Resurrection. Written between 90 and 100 AD, it tells the story of Jesus in more theological and symbolic language than the accounts of the other evangelists. We have to be careful to think about the symbolic meanings behind the words.

Wednesday, May 5

John's Presentation of Jesus

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus is the light coming into the world (1:9), the Word of God made flesh (1:14), and the glory of God is revealed in him. Jesus is sent into the world to redeem us; even more, he comes to reveal the glory of God. To see him is to see the Father, and to believe in him is to believe in the Father. In this account, Jesus is never out of control. Everything happens in God's time. Jesus hands over his life; it is not taken from him. The only real authority belongs to God.

Thursday, May 6

Teachings and Signs

There are very few miracle stories in the Gospel according to John. Instead, we hear five long discourses. (The last one occurs this week and next: 13:31–33a, 34–35, and 14:23–29.) These discourses are filled with Jesus' teaching about his unity with the Father and the Father's desire that all be one with him forever. They are punctuated with "signs" like the multiplication of loaves, the healing of a blind man, and the raising of Lazarus. The final sign, of course, will be the Resurrection, accompanied by the acknowledgment that this was reported by an eyewitness whose testimony is true (21:24).

Friday, May 7

God Is Love

The last discourse of Jesus lasts for four full chapters and follows the washing of the feet. It is Jesus' attempt to prepare his disciples for what is to come. In the beginning of the discourse (14:1), Jesus reveals that the Father's house has many mansions. At the end (17:26) he says to his Father, "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Saturday, May 8

Jesus, the Father, and Us

All of Jesus' discourses are intended to teach us about the remarkable relationship between Jesus and the Father and about the relationship that God wants with us. Take some time to read John 14–17 on your own. Read it out loud, and listen to the voice of Jesus: "Peace be with you. . . . I am the vine, you are the branches. . . . love one another." In your prayer, thank God for the gift of love expressed in his Son, Jesus Christ.



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 Keeping the Seasons
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