

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Fr Callistus Khathali - HOMILY : FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 15 May 2022

John 13:34

I give you a new commandment love one another, you must love one another just as I have loved you.

The gospel of today (John 13:31-33,34-35) presents us with the new commandment of love. This is the commandment that identifies the Lord's disciples through the love they have for one another. I will focus on how Jesus qualifies this love - **JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU**. All four gospels are full of how Jesus loved us. I will look at three examples of how this love was made manifest to us.

The first example is that of incarnation. The eternal Word that was present from the beginning as we read in the first chapter of John's gospel. In the fullness of time the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Just above a week ago the Church called us to reflect on Jesus as the bread of life in the whole of the sixth chapter of John's gospel. When Jesus taught that whoever eats his flesh, and drinks his blood will have eternal life, many of those who were following him left him. They could not take the teaching on the importance of the flesh, something that was unheard of among the people that Jesus was addressing. Flesh was very lowly placed and could not be identified with the Divine one.

As a human being, Jesus joined the people that had been unfaithful to the covenant, joined the people that was oppressed by the Roman Empire. He was to be eventually crucified under that very Roman Rule as we say in our creed, "he suffered under Pontius Pilate" (the Roman emperor at that time).

Secondly his love was made manifest in the way that he forgave us, and still continues to forgive us. He forgave those who crucified him. he forgave the adulterous woman who should have been stoned to death because of her sins. In Jesus the words of Psalm 103:12, "as far as the east is from the west, so far does God removes our sins from us", are fulfilled. He totally removes our sins from us because of the love he has for us.

Finally Jesus raises us up to his high level as another way of showing how he loves us. He want us to be where he is. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is filled with how the apostles became like Christ in their preaching, teaching, and even in the miracles they performed. They were even able to walk out of prisons with gates securely locked, and guards standing by those gates, just like the risen Lord who was able to walk in through those locked doors. We too have been made co-heirs with the Christ in the Kingdom of God, sharing equally in his glorified self. The vision of the heavenly Jerusalem in our second reading (Revelation 21:1-5) is about how we have been called to be part of this glorified reality of Christ.

These examples of how Jesus loves us call us to reflect on how we love one another. Can we say that we do take the fall for the other in expressing how we love them? Can we reduce ourselves to the lowest levels so as to be in solidarity with a brother or a sister who has fallen? What about our ability to forgive? Can we forgive unceasingly and without counting the cost? Finally can we truly say that we are constantly raising others to our levels, especially those who are below our levels in the society?

Let us remember that we are called to love one another just as Jesus loves us.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I will meditate on the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary as I pray for your personal intentions during this month of Mary.

Have a wonderful Sunday.

Fr Callistus Khathali