

May 15, 2022
5th Sunday of Easter
John 13:31-35

When Judas had left, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."



Background

The gospels for the earlier Sundays in the Easter Season have focused on the empty tomb or on the disciples' experiences of the risen Lord. This gospel text shifts back to before Jesus' crucifixion, when Jesus was celebrating his final Passover with his disciples. It fits into the Easter season because in some sense the glory of God is revealed in the person of Jesus and his willingness to live through the events of the passion and resurrection. Jesus' faithfulness reveals God's faithfulness.

The verses immediately preceding the text for today are: "So Jesus said to Judas, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.' Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, 'Buy what we need for the feast,' or to give something to the poor. So he took the morsel and left at once. And it was night." (John 27b-30)

Judas left the Passover celebration to set in motion his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. It was as if a leaf, by falling from a tree into a stream, was set on a journey down the stream. While it appears as if only suffering and death await, the truth is much larger. The hour of suffering and death is also the hour of Jesus' greatest glory. Jesus is glorified in his willingness to endure suffering and death, and in the ultimate expression of his willingness to surrender to God's will. But at the same time, it is God's ultimate expression of God's desire to be one with us that will not be cancelled or diminished by the prospect of suffering and death. God will not retreat from God's desire to be with us, no matter the cost. God does not intervene to cancel Jesus' passion and death, but instead acts to reveal its meaning.

In the gospel, Jesus addresses the remaining disciples as "my children." This is an affectionate way for a teacher of the time to address his students. As Jesus has acted to make known God's love for them, they are now to act to make God's love present to each other. Jesus will no longer be present among them. Therefore, they are each to take up the role of teacher in how they are present to one another.

Reflection Questions

1. What are some of the things you are most proud of in your life?
2. When did the journey toward those moments begin? What was that journey like?
3. How has your decision to live by the example of Jesus affected the way your life has unfolded?

4. How do you think the decision the early disciples made to become followers of Jesus affected their lives?
5. How does the fact that at this moment Jesus addresses the disciples as “my children” affect how you hear the rest of Jesus’ instruction?
6. How do you think the disciples heard it when Jesus told them that where he was going, they could not follow?
7. How do you think they heard his “new commandment” that they should love one another?
8. Can you take some time now to talk to God about your awareness of God’s love for you, the commandment to love others as God has loved you, or some other awareness that rose within you from this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM.
 They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel.
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Food For Thought (Bro Alan): In the comments I have underlined a statement about Judas’ leaving the Passover early, When you leave Mass after receiving Eucharist or before the celebration is concluded.... What might such an action suggest about your faith life?

Please note:

This will be the last update until R.C.I.A. resumes in September. Have a glorious and safe summer season!

Bro Alan Gaebel, ofm, cap.

