

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 6 2018

Love, love, love. This could actually be our mission statement as Christians. God is love, Jesus' life, death and resurrection is love and the Holy Spirit that falls upon us in our baptism is love. How can we not love our triune God back?

In today's first reading we hear that "God shows no partiality" and that all who fear him and act uprightly are acceptable to him. Peter makes it clear that all are to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Do we not catch ourselves sometimes saying, "why are they here?" or "who invited them to our gathering?" It is often difficult to want to share this love and joy that we experience from God, but that is exactly what we hear from Jesus in the Gospel today, love one another as I love you. No exceptions, no exclusions, no attempts to hold back from some the love that the Father has given him.

"How can I love like this?", you ask. The answer is to start with the one you see each morning in the mirror! Jesus didn't say to love the loveable or only those we like. That is just instinct. Even our pets love those who show affection and bring treats. That is nice love. Jesus calls us to something greater than that; to love others as he loves us. The truth is that we can only love that way if Jesus puts that love in our hearts. That is the way parents share their love, that is the secret that true loves understand and that is the secret that true Christians hold. Not that we are a superior race or nation who are selfless people, but that God loves us first, in Jesus.

To love as Jesus loves us requires grace; a gift from above. It is clarified for us in the second reading today, "In this is love; not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins." It is a relationship that God himself continually fosters and extends to us, even in our brokenness, sinfulness and imperfect selves. Isn't it a joy to know that the most enjoyable mystery of life; love is the biggest commandment of God. It shows that God is indeed on our side. It is to do what we want most to do and experience; to love and be loved. Even if that love costs us something. God is love.

How can we not sing and say Alleluia to that?

Dan Blentlinger
Deacon Aspirant