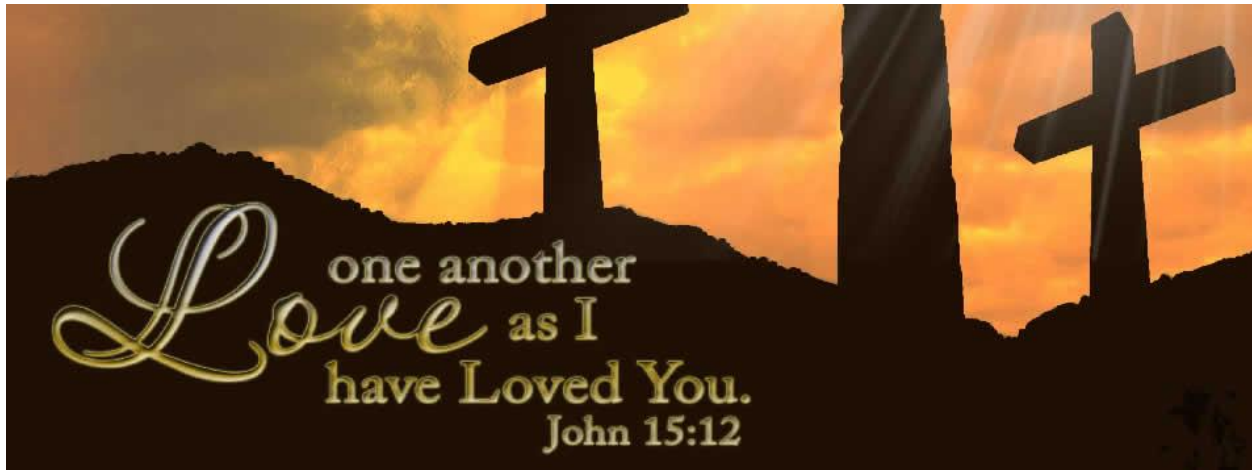


FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Mother Teresa's love:

One day, as St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and her Missionaries of Charity were tending to the poorest of the poor on the streets of Calcutta, they happened across a man lying in the gutter, very near death. He was filthy, dressed in little more than a rag and flies swarmed around his body. Immediately, Mother Teresa lovingly lifted him up, cleaned his body, spoke to him softly and laid him comfortably in her ambulance. A passerby was repulsed by the sight of the man and exclaimed to Mother Teresa, *"I wouldn't do that for a million dollars."* Her response was immediate, *"Neither would I!"* — She demonstrated the type of love that Jesus wants from Christians. Mother Teresa remarked that the greatest disease in the World today is not tuberculosis, leprosy or even A.I.D.S.; it is being unwanted, uncared for, unloved. That she did her part in trying to "cure" this disease was attested in everything she did and in every word she said.

Jesus by which he said in today's gospel: "Love one another, as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (v.34).

On this statement of Jesus, I propose three things for you to reflect on today's gospel.

First, it is a Command. It is not an invitation. It is not a request and it is not an option. First and foremost, it is a command or an order. Being a command, it calls for total obedience on our part. In other words, it is an obligation to love one another.

Second, the Lord says to us: "Love one another." He did not say, "Love one another when you are both young or when you are both healthy." He did not say: "Love one another when the other one has stopped offending you." He did not say: "love one another when the other loves you or good to you or he/she is cute or he/she is rich," and others. The Lord only says, "Love one another," without any conditions or limitations. He might say: "Love one another even if she/he doesn't love you or like or refuses to forgive you or he/she

doesn't need you anymore or she/he is no longer cute and desirable". In other words, to love is forever.

There was a little girl who was born without an ear. She became shy and introverted person. There were times when she would go home crying because her classmates made fun of her. When she became a teenager, her mother brought her to a surgeon who performed an ear transplant on her. The operation was successful and she became a normal and happy person.

Not long after she had a boyfriend. After several years, she decided to get married. On the eve of her wedding day, she went inside her mother's room to thank her. But as she embraced her, she noticed something strange...something absent. She realized that beneath the long hair of her mother was a missing ear.

She cried and said: "It was you! All these years you didn't tell me it was you." The mother replied: "My child, I didn't tell you because I don't want you to be sad for me. I did it because I want you to be happy, to see you happy with your life. You don't lose something when you give it to someone you love."

Third, the Lord says: "Love one another as I have loved you." In this statement, once again, Jesus reminds us that love is the soul of our Christian life. It is not the liturgy or the cultic worship but love which is the core and the soul of our Christian life.

When St. Bernard was asked, what is the measure of love, he answered: "The measure of love is to love without measure." Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us an example of a love without measure. He did not condemn Mary Magdalene. He called St. Matthew to be His apostle even though Matthew was a tax collector and a sinner. He even was not afraid to touch and heal the sick and stretched out his hands to the lepers who were considered as 'untouchables' during that time because nobody wanted to touch them and be near to them.

This is the reason why we have to love one another not in the measure of our human ability to love or on account of how others can return our love but as God has loved us. Like for example, for wives, your husbands may not be perfect husbands yet you have to love them not because they have met your expectations but as Jesus loved us. For husbands, your wives may have weaknesses and shortcomings, but as Jesus loved us you must love them. You may have frustrations with your children but you continue to love them because of the love of Jesus that you experience in your life. This Christian principle is applied even to our enemies.

To end my sharing with you, I would like you to reflect on these questions: Do you make love as the soul of your life? Do you love enough to give life to your Christian commitment? If not, then all liturgies, all cultic worship would become in vain.

AMEN: GOD BLESS YOU.