

Sixth Sunday of Easter 2021

My beloved brothers and sisters, today's Gospel is a continuation of the Last Will and Testament of Jesus, His last words to the disciples after He has washed their feet at the Last Supper. Judas has already left to betray Jesus. Therefore, these words of Jesus which run about three Chapters, are said by Him with the utmost seriousness, and heard with great sadness on the part of His disciples! We too must take His admonition to us with the greatest of seriousness; because He tells us the essence of the whole of His teaching in one sentence. It is the New Commandment that concludes His teaching which He will make visible on His Cross: "Love one another as I have loved you!" If we are trying to do this, we are on the only path that can truly lead us to fulfillment and joy in this life and to heaven in the next!

Jesus even defines for us what He means by love: "a man can have no greater love than this: that he lay down his life for His friends." The devil, the prince of this world has distorted the meaning of love, and turned it into something banal and tawdry. Jesus tells us the true meaning of love which means our loving self-giving for others. The greater the self-giving, the greater the love! It means a life of loving service for others; when we live to give, and not to take. It means a willingness, even to suffer in order to serve and love others.

Jesus makes this love visible in His own life and death! He accepted mockery, humiliation, torture, rejection, misunderstanding, betrayal and finally, death. Even in His death, this ultimate act was the ultimate act of loving us: "...It is finished, and He breathed out His Spirit...from His side flowed blood and water...". This ultimate act of love is made visible to us in every celebration of the Eucharist, in which He gives us the eternal and timeless act of His self-giving on the cross and then His own Body and Blood to eat and drink: the Bread of Life and the Cup of Eternal Salvation!

On the cross, He even pleads for the forgiveness of those who have caused the cross, for each one of us!

You do not understand your Christian Faith unless you understand this: Jesus, the Son of God is giving Himself to you, even now, without counting the cost, and without asking anything in return. This is the meaning of God's love; is it ours?

