

Easter 5 5-1-10 St. Luke's, EG 8 & 10

**Just as I have loved YOU, so you are to love one another....**

In the name of the Living God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

LOVING HAS NEVER BEEN EASY!

Despite our love soaked culture, even love-**obsessed** you might say, with the huge overuse of that 4-letter word, the kind of love the Bible talks about **takes a lot of work** and isn't just about feelings by a long shot.

Who remembers the line: "Love means never having to say you're sorry!" NOT!!! What rubbish I thought even way back in the 60's when that movie came out called "LOVE STORY."

Jesus in what are called the *Farewell Discourses* speaks to his disciples about loving one another as he has loved them and will love them as the scenario play out....which means WHAT?? The Cross, of course, and the kind of loving that costs a lot, even maybe one's life!

Think about the time you loved someone and it cost you your heart's desire, but you still did it anyway, despite your feelings.

Love means putting someone else's best interests ahead of one's own...like in marriage, or as in parenting, or as in "best friendship" when the needs of the other come first, and when saying "sorry" is really essential.

This is not easy and is why for a Christian the vows we take at baptism and confirm at Confirmation, and renew at every parish baptism, are always followed up with the phrase, "I will, with God's help." WE CAN'T DO IT ON OUR OWN: all that respecting the dignity of others, working for justice when it's perhaps against the grain of our own well being, even repenting our sins when we've messed up, and keeping up our church attendance, our prayers, and the breaking of bread. PHEW, it's a lot, this Christian enterprise, this following Jesus, this renewing of our commitment over and over and over again. We can't live the Christian life on our own, by ourselves, or on our own power alone!

We look to a power deep within ourselves that may just rise up enabling our best selves to emerge because *we pray our hearts and minds out* that God will help us do what we **will** to do.

We do those things we want NOT to do, and don't do those things we want to do...God help us out of that mess! ("We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought **not** to have done"...That's the old confession and it really expressed well the predicament we often find ourselves in...sometimes indeed it seems "there is no health in us." But, the prayer continues: "Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults...")

Like when we are enabled to forgive someone when we've been badly hurt and we can't really forgive them on our own...pray for that person and see what may happen. It's a miracle!!

We pray today to "*know Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life*"...SO THAT we may follow his steps in the way that leads to ETERNAL life.

That is **some** petition, **SOME** vision, is it not, that has inspired people for two thousand years, and may YET inspire US, confirmand, parent, spouse, friend, colleague, congregation: **ALL of us** in ways that will enrich the worlds in which we live and move and have our being.

This is what it means to be a "resurrection people" trusting in the promises of Jesus to walk in his way, trust in his truth and follow. George Herbert writes an immortal poem, THE CALL, based on this Scripture the choir will sing at the offertory: *Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life* (487)...

*Such a way that gives us breath;  
such a truth as ends all strife;  
such a life as killeth death!!*

The text is soooo inspiring: "Come my Light, my Feast, my Strength: Such a light as shows a feast; such a feast as mends in length; such a strength as makes his guest." (read it again at hymn 487, soak in it!)

May we be STRENGTHENED as guests at THIS feast on this 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Easter season...it is NOT TO LATE to get the message and to commit to live by it, as Jesus, the Christ, calls us to do, challenging as that call may be!

It's all about LOVE, and how it gets out!!! How it is shown, shared and manifested !!! We sense it in our families, of course, but more cosmically in the church at its best, the worldwide community that cares, heals, consoles, but also CHALLENGES and charges us just as Jesus did with his disciples before he was to leave them: "This is my commandment that you should love each other as I have love you."

What a miracle!! The heavenly visions in the Acts and Revelation passages today confirm that **inclusive** love of the Lord God for ALL people, even the Gentiles the Jews had a hard time accepting back in the beginnings of the early church...oh my, things haven't changed much, yet we persevere in loving those different from us and who may have needs that challenge or compromise our own!! But that seems to be just how it is, so we keep up our prayers and renew our commitments to BE Christs wherever we are.

The old heaven and earth are passed away, **even death is passed away** in this vision of the new Jerusalem into which we are invited today: no grief, no pain, even all tears will be wiped away. There will be NO BARRIERS between the Lord God and us in this Jesus, the Cosmic Christ of the NEW heaven and earth!! We recognize with Meister Eckhart, mystic of long ago that *"every single creature is full of God—is a book about God!"*

WOW! That is the world into which our confirmands are now embarked, a life long journey, deepening and widening as they travel, **not seeking success** as much as **faithfulness** to the Holy Spirit within them, guiding, prodding, challenging, consoling, strengthening them for this journey.

We keep getting closer and closer to our centers which is Christ. Every now and then God lifts a corner of the veil and enters into our awareness through various channels, personal, nature, music, beauty, justice, as if to say:

"Here I am. **Where are you?**

Come and join me"

in this LOVE FEAST like no other in your life,  
even now as we stand to say we believe....

