

The Rev. Dr. David K. McIntosh  
May 9, 2021- Easter 6B  
Given at St. Mark's Church, Bridgewater, CT

ACTS 10:44-48 ; PSALM 98; 1 JOHN 5:1-6 ; JOHN 15:9-17

**“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you;  
abide in my love.” †**

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Today is Mother's Day and in the Church this is also 'Rogation Sunday'... it recalls the Medieval practice of praying for good weather and good harvest and of processing around boundaries of the parish to mark the areas God is to protect and make flourish, those areas that pay tithes to the parish...

Once while at St. Andrew's in Kent when celebrating a weekday service, I said I didn't believe that God responds that way or directly controls our weather... only to experience the most violent Thunderstorm I've ever known in CT!...

And so, I'm not preaching on Rogation Days again!

I want to preach about something I do believe in... so fitting for Mother's Day...

LOVE.

All Easter, we've read and heard from the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John... its beautiful lines love and how we are children of God, a family called to live in God's love.

And today's Gospel (John) mentions 'love' more than anywhere else in the Gospels... and Jesus says, 'Abide in my love.'

I wonder... What does this mean?

Well, Jesus tells us... to abide is:

(1) To filled with JOY...

To walk the way of Jesus – a way that leads toward happiness... a walk not toward the world and its priorities, but toward God.

(2) To abide is to be a friend...

Jesus tells us today, we are not slaves, but friends...

Greek word for 'slave' in the OT (Septuagint) *doulos* – is often respectful... Moses is referred to as 'God's slave' (Deut 34.5) and Joshua ((Josh 24.29) and David (Psm 89.30), in the NT St Paul continually refers to himself as 'God's slave'... this is not a title of shame, but of great honor... and Jesus tells us, 'you are so much more than that!' You are my friends!

Jesus asks that we be God's friend, and live together as friends, as family... as God's family, loving God and one another... That's the Xian way!

(3) Finally, to abide in his love, is to follow his command to us, his *mandatum*

'Love one another as I have loved you,'

To abide is to be part of the vine, as we heard last week, to do something... and that something is love.

And, God is love... we've heard that over the past several Sundays from this 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John... God is love.

One of my favorite anthems is 'Ubi Caritas' ...

*Ubi caritas et amor... ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.'*

Where there is charity... where there is love... there is God... wherever love is, there is God found...

As Xians, it's what defines us: we live in love...

We are called not to love as we choose to love, but as God loves. We are NOT called to compete, or to chastise, or to dispute one another... but to love!

Jesus tells us to go out and 'bear fruit' and that fruit is love.... For, where there is love & charity, there is God!

Phillips Brooks: 'Power, no matter how well intentioned, tends to cause suffering. Love, being vulnerable, absorbs suffering... on a hill called Calvary, God renounced the one for the sake of the other.' God renounced power for love... as thus we are called to do the same.

How do we abide in God's love?

- By living in joy and happiness, following the way of Jesus,
- By living God's mission of love & reconciliation in this world...
- By Love...

Old folk song: 'And they'll know we are Xians by our love, by our love, and they'll know we are Christians by our love.'

As we approach the celebration of Pentecost, eager to embrace the inspirational presence of God, the Holy Spirit... May we remember that God is, and always has been, present among us as love... that God chose us, that God's love endures and conquers all things...

Just as we are loved, so we are called to love... for he commands us: 'Abide in my love.'

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