

Homily Notes for Sunday, May 6, 2018, Sixth of Easter B

Readings: ACTS 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48; I JN 4 : 7-10; JOHN 15 : 9-17

1. Summary: Today's readings demonstrate the love of God, to be exercised by us in our closest relationships as well as for those out on the peripheries. Let us remember the "V Encounter" of last fall. Let us push out beyond the well-known and the comfortable. What does that mean for our ministry here in Chandler?

2. In the first reading, Peter teaches us that God shows no partiality in His love and that God loves everyone, both the Jews and the Gentiles, and wants everyone to be saved through His son Jesus. That is why God provided Peter with the vision of accepting that which previously had been seen as unclean before welcoming the Roman centurion Cornelius as the first non-Jew to become a Christian (see Acts 10:9-16). Furthermore, God also allowed the Gentiles who heard Peter's speech to receive the same Holy Spirit that Peter's Jewish audience had received on the day of Pentecost.

Hence, Peter says,

"In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."

Basic value: impartiality. We want to be impartial. What is partiality? Partiality is a tendency to favor unfairly or to act on prejudice. Impartiality is a freedom from favoritism, bias or prejudice, fairness, justice. This should be a basic American value.

3. Today's psalm directs our attention toward God's marvelous love and kindness in offering salvation to the whole world. **Key verse:**

"The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power."

Does this come from the O.T. or the N.T? It shows that God's plan is for the whole world.

4. In the second reading John defines God as love and explains that He expressed His love for mankind by sending His son to die for us humans "*as expiation for our sins.*" This divine love gives us the command as well as duty to love one another as we have been loved by God. Since God has loved us first, we can and should love God in return, loving both ourselves and loving one another.

Key verse. "Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

What is love? Contrast "agape" love with other Greek words: "Eros" is the emotional and unstable love of feeling (erotic) Note that this word is never used in the New Testament.). "Storge" represents "family love." "Phileo" represents brotherly love (Philadelphia). "Agape" refers to the love of God and of our love of God. In relationships this refers more to "Willing the good for the other" more than simple feeling. It is directed by divine values and standards and implies both commitment and duty.

5. In today's Gospel. After telling the parable of the vine and branches, Jesus explains precisely how the disciples are to remain bonded to him as branches are bonded to a vine. They are to obey his commandment of love just as he has obeyed his heavenly Father's will by fulfilling His commandments and remaining inseparably bonded with his Father. *Jesus' unconditional, forgiving, selfless and sacrificial love for us must be the criterion of our love for others.* The highest expression of this love is our willingness to lay down our lives as Jesus did, for people who don't deserve it. The goal and result of this will be perfect joy. Jesus calls us friends, he tells us that he has chosen us, and that, if we use his name, we can ask the Father for anything.

Key verse: "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend" (Jn 15:13).

Application:

6. In marriages, to love one another means to care for one another, to listen to one another, to sacrifice for the other, to do whatever is needed to nurture and care for this divine relationship. Every sacramental marriage is a divine relationship reflecting the values and commitments of God's covenant with us. This means taking the time to talk with and communicate with one's spouse instead of being focused on one's agenda.

Example of Dr. Smith, teacher of theology at the College of Wooster.

Example of the Rev Dr. Charlie Shedd, pastor of a church in Houston which went from 40 to 4,000 during his time there. One time out privately with his wife per week. One time out individually with each of his four children per month.

7. Concerning husbands: St. Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church (Ephesians 5: 25). Husbands have the solemn duty to sacrifice themselves continually in their total love for their wives and their children. Each day provides numerous opportunities for husbands to live out their family life with many acts of patience, kindness and service. The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

8. Men, please speak with your sons about becoming “Catholic gentlemen”, “Caballeros Católicos”. Do our young men really know how “to love” the young women around them, especially when they go off to study? We discussed this in the youth section of catechesis on Wednesday evening. Parents, especially fathers, are our young men prepared to respect and defend the honor and purity of our women? We will continue discussing “How to Find Your Soulmate Without Losing Your Soul” for two more weeks.

9. Mothers, please speak with your daughters about how to present themselves before young men and how to behave, matters of modesty, of behavior. Our youth must be prepared “to love” each other correctly.

10. Loving one another and Protecting Motherhood: Next week is Mothers’ Day. How, as Catholics, can we appreciate, defend and protect motherhood? Today, we must respect the Word of God and the teaching of the Church concerning sexual matters: birth control, abortion, homosexuality, and same sex unions., cohabitation and pre-marital sex. *None of these produces children, hence eliminating mothers and motherhood.* One only becomes a mother or a father when one has children. Furthermore we must protect against cohabitation and pre-marital sex which can allow for children but do not provide a stable and adequate formation for their children. We must not think only about ourselves and our desires but about the good of our children and our society. We must understand “the theology of the body.” The final practices allow for mothers but are fundamentally destructive to the marriage bond, Note that only 5% of children in poverty have both a mother and a father, while unwed mothers make up the largest single proportion of the poor and receivers of welfare.

11. Beyond family and friends to those on the periphery. Note that all that we have discussed above is basic to us understanding what love is and how to love. But loving one another goes from beyond family and marriage. It is basic to every one of our relationships with all people. Another aspect is relating to those “on the periphery”. How can we do this?

12. We have a situation in this country and in our very church fellowship of different cultures, notable the English speaking and the Spanish speaking. Are we willing to put out the energy from both sides to understand each other and to care for each other? We are quite different, not only in culture but in age, in interests, in responsibilities. How to function together in love? Is it possible for us to not love one another when we have the model of love of Jesus, the crucifix, constantly before us? Is this not classically Catholic?

13. How can we “love” those around us who we do not know, whose situations are very different, whose religion is different? Example of St Vincent de Paul Society.

14. Finally, at the deepest level of our faith, how can we show our love of God? Bishop Strickland is calling on us to honor

“The Most Holy Eucharist.” This would show our love of God most directly, would it not?
We would like to have a beautiful church with at high and graceful ceiling! We are working toward it. How is our behavior in Church? Are we quiet and respectful in the Church itself, allowing for personal prayer? Do we kneel and genuflect properly to show our respect for the presence of Jesus and his holy Altar and Word? Do we recognize His presence in the Tabernacle and always remember to honor that presence too?
Ultimately, we show that we love our God when we love our brothers and sisters in the faith. May we always do this within our fellowship and to all outside also!

