

Homily for the 5th Sunday of Easter 2022 Year C

Jesus saw Judas leave the room at the Last Supper and He knew Judas was on his way to betray Him, a complete failure of love. Jesus, with a heavy heart, tried once more to impress upon those who were to be His followers, the supreme importance of love.

This love was the new order that He had come to bring and this, above all, would be how the world would recognise His followers.

The price that Christ paid for His love for us was death on the cross, and He warns us that loving will always be difficult and demanding.

It is an important lesson to learn though, because, as Saint John warns us, in the evening of our lives we will be judged on how well we have loved.

Part of the difficulty for us is this universal demand of Christ that nobody is to be excluded from our loving.

It is easy to love our friends and those who are kind and loving towards us, but what about our enemies, those who have hurt us and done us harm and maybe even still do?

Perhaps what needs to be said here to avoid a sense of despair is that no lasting conversion of life takes place overnight. To achieve Christ's values is often the work of a lifetime and requires a lot of patience.

If we say that God is love, then whenever we experience love or act lovingly ourselves, that love, if it is real, has to have its source in God, and it is therefore a fragment of eternity within our being which gives meaning and value to our lives.

This love is a very powerful thing; it gives meaning to impossible situations; it brings light into darkness; it melts hearts grown chill and cold; it inspires people; it gives them hope and courage to continue walking the difficult road that may lie ahead.

The Lord may not be walking our pathway today in His physical body, but in every age He renews the whole of creation through the love of His followers.

Sharpen up your awareness that we are the chosen instruments of His love and grace, through which others may experience His love. We all know stories of the great Saints, whose love of God inspired them to heroic deeds, but that may not be our way. A simple smile costs nothing, but it can mean so much to somebody else who is lonely or depressed, because it comes from the heart.

In one sense the only failure facing any Christian in life is the failure to love.

The Gospel is an invitation to look into our hearts and see how we are answering this call to love in our lives and within our families. There is always the danger that we may be so in love with ourselves that there is little or no room for the love of others. The presence of God so easily slips into the background when we give way to this inner selfishness.

The real test of love is how we respect others. That is Christ's standard. You cannot be a friend of Christ if you do not love your neighbour.