

Friday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 15:12-17): Jesus said to his disciples, “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.”

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you”

Fr. Carles ELÍAS i Cao
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Today, our Lord exhorts us to fraternal love: “love one another as I love you.” (Jn 15:12), that is to say, as you have seen me loving and you will still see me love. Jesus speaks to you as a friend, for He has told you that his Father calls you, that He wants you to become an apostle, and that He expects you to bear fruit, a fruit that is manifested through love. St. John Chrysostom affirms: “If love would be spread all over, an infinite goodness would be born out of it.”

To give love amounts to create life. Spouses know it well, for they love each other, they make a reciprocal donation and they assume the responsibility of becoming parents by accepting, at the same time, the abnegation and self-denial of their time and their own being in favor of those they must take care of, must protect, must educate and, in short, must form as persons. Missionaries know it too, when they offer their life for the Gospel, with the same Christian spirit of sacrifice and abnegation. And friars, priests and bishops also know it, and with them all of Jesus' disciples who commit themselves to our Savior.

A little before, Jesus already told you which the requirements for love and bearing fruit are: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (Jn 12:24). Jesus invites you to lose your life, to deliver it to Him without any fear, to willingly die, if need be, to be able to love your brother with Christ's love, with supernatural love. Jesus invites you to attain an operative, benefactor and concrete love; this is how apostle James understood it when he said: “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (2:15-17).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“If you seek the example of love: Greater love than this no man has, than to lay down his life for his friends. Such a man was Christ on the cross. And if he gave his life for us, then it should not be difficult to bear whatever hardships arise for his sake” (Saint Thomas Aquinas)

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“His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against. It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move” (Benedict XVI)

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“By embracing in his human heart the Father's love for men, Jesus ‘loved them to the end’ (Jn 13:1), for ‘greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends’ (Jn 15:13). In suffering and death his humanity became the free and perfect instrument of his divine love which desires the salvation of men. Indeed, out of love for his Father and for men, Jesus freely accepted his Passion and death” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 609)