

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

A proud and confident genius makes a bet with an idiot. The genius says, "Hey idiot, every question I ask you that you don't know the answer, you have to give me \$5. And if you ask me a question and I can't answer yours, I will give you \$5,000." The idiot says, "Okay." The genius then asks, "How many continents are there in the world?" The idiot doesn't know and hands over the \$5. The idiot says, "Now me ask: what animal stands with two legs but sleeps with three?" The genius tries and searches very hard for the answer but gives up and hands over the \$5000. The genius says, "Dang it, I lost. By the way, what was the answer to your question?" The idiot hands over \$5.

Dear Friends,

There are so many ways to express our love with someone. To be connected, we need to initiate relationships. Today's liturgy helps us find out the ways to be connected with Jesus and bear fruits on earth.

In today's Gospel, we witness one of the most intimate and moving moments in Jesus' life with His disciples. It takes place at the Last Supper, shortly after Judas leaves to betray Him. Jesus, fully aware that His hour has come, doesn't offer a lengthy theological lecture or a list of instructions. Instead, He gives a single, powerful command:

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

This is not just a repetition of the Old Testament command to "love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus raises the bar. He says, "as I have loved you." It is a new commandment because the standard of love has changed. It is no longer based on how we love ourselves, but on how Christ loves us — a love that is self-giving, sacrificial, and unconditional.

One day, as St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa, 1910-1997) and her Missionaries of Charity were tending to the poorest of the poor on the streets of Calcutta, they happened across a man lying in the gutter, very near death. He was filthy, dressed in little more than a rag and flies swarmed around his body. Immediately, Mother Teresa embraced him, spoke to him softly and began to pick out the maggots that were nesting in his flesh. A passerby was repulsed by the sight of the man and exclaimed to Mother Teresa, "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars." Her response was immediate, "Neither would I!"

It is significant that Jesus speaks this commandment just after Judas has left to betray Him. Jesus knows what is coming: the arrest, the cross, the abandonment. Yet He chooses to speak of love. This shows us that Christian love is not based on the worthiness of the

other, but on the decision to love as Christ loves — even those who fail, betray, or hurt us.

Jesus gave this commandment as a part of his departure from the disciples. It is so fitting for me to challenge you to grow in love. It is going to be new for both of us. Old things pass away, new things come in. how do we grow together as one in Christ? I would like to see that we embrace every person that comes into our church as our friends, brothers and sisters.

I would like you to reflect on what did you see as a growth in your faith life? How was I helpful to grow in your love for God and people? How do I want to see you growing in our faith?

Love God, be faith filled, make our neighbor in the pew as friends, as a brother in Christ.