

Read



Acts 10:25-26, 34-35,
44-48

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

LIVING THE WORD

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 9, 2021



REFLECTION

You might remember the famous charge from Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*: "All for one and one for all." This phrase exemplifies a relationship where individual members are so closely connected that they represent a single, cohesive whole. As in the case of the three musketeers from that story, a common mission forms identity and unites the group. This shared identity is not unlike what Jesus describes in today's Gospel. When Jesus says, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love" (John 15:9), he invites us into the intimate relationship he shares with the Father. As we enter into this relationship, we commit ourselves to the mission of Christ. With this, our relationship with God cannot be passive. We must be willing to say that we are one with God. Likewise, people should be able to encounter God in us.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does it mean to live in God's love?
- ❖ Do you consider yourself to be a friend of God?



ACTION

Working toward full and uninhibited union with God is a journey that lasts our entire lifetime. We will only reach a perfect relationship with God in heaven, but we can still work toward this while on earth. While on this journey, we sometimes fall short of the union in God's love to which we are called. Before you go to sleep, take time to reflect on some of the ways you may have failed to live in God's love today. As you bring these moments to moments to mind, know how much God loves you and that nothing can ever separate you from God's love. When you are finished reflecting, ask God to help you live in love tomorrow. The new day brings new opportunities.





May 9, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #56B

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today's Gospel reading reminds us of the importance of remaining in Christ. Last week we talked about the bearing good fruit in the world because of our dependence on God. This week, Jesus tells his disciples again to remain in him. He focuses on the love of God that will sustain them in their work. Jesus himself shows us the greatest expression of love by sacrificing his life so that we might have life. We can show this same love to others in our daily activities.

Q FOCUS: *The greatest commandment is to love one another as Jesus loves us.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Many agricultural communities will celebrate the memorial of St. Isidore the Farmer on May 15. St. Isidore was an eleventh-century Spaniard who was married to a woman named Maria. Both Isidore and Maria are named as saints for their devout life and their commitment to serving the poor. Although St. Isidore was a hired hand who worked in the fields, he spent many hours in prayer while he worked. He also attended daily Mass. The life of St. Isidore reminds us that we can incorporate prayer into our daily life and live out the Gospel message by serving others.

Church Teaching Connection

"We offer the Catholics of the United States the same invitation as Jesus: Come and follow! Come, hear the Lord calling each one of us; come, follow the Teacher who makes us his disciples. Come, be part of the story of salvation.

Our invitation asks every believer to discover ways that he or she can realize this plan in every way appropriate—personally, in the family, in the neighborhood and parish, or as part of a larger organization" (*Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, 129-130).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 15:9-17

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. 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."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

► **What are the Ten Commandments? Can you name them and explain them? (You can look up a list of the Ten Commandments or read Exodus 20:1-17.)**

All these commandments help us to better understand our relationship with God, others, and self. By prioritizing God in our life, we place all our other relationships, with friends, family members, the things have, etc., in the proper order. First, love God, then love others as God loves them. We should treat ourselves in that same manner and always look to God for guidance. The Ten Commandments are not an outdated list of rules. They tell us how to live in this world, where so many things compete for our attention and time.

► **How do these commandments help you make choices?**

► **What is the new commandment that Jesus reminds us of today?**

Jesus tells his followers in today's Gospel to love each other as he loves them. We know that Jesus' love is a love that surpasses all human expression of love. Jesus is God and gives us the gift of himself. He loves us, so much so that he gave his life so that he could give us salvation and a way to eternal life with God. Many people are not faced with the extreme example of love that Jesus was, laying down his own life so that others might live. Still, we are faced with small conflicts throughout our day that might require us to sacrifice something.

► **What might you sacrifice in a conflict with someone so that you remain their friend? What compromises have you made for your friends and family?**

Jesus was sure to have witnessed the many conflicts that are part of human life. Communication problems, misunderstandings, jealousy, anger, stress, dishonesty, and betrayal probably occurred among the early followers, just as they do among Christians today. Jesus' commandment encourages us to see others through his eyes, with the lens of unconditional love. When we do this, we are living in the freedom of Jesus' love. We aren't held back by our sins or our selfish desires. We are able to recognize Jesus' love and sacrifice as things that support us on our Christian life.

► **How does your relationship with Jesus help you to make sacrifices for others and bear good fruit in the world?**

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 184.

Jesus calls us to love each other as he loves us.

There is freedom in the love of God.

Because we are loved unconditionally, we do not have to feel enslaved to the earthly world.

Act on the Word

Love One Another as Jesus Loves You

For this session, you will need stationary paper, pens, envelopes, newsprint or butcher paper, supplies to make either hygiene kits or sandwiches for a local food bank (you might ask the parish or families to bring items in for this project).

Create three stations for the teens to go to for this session. Each station will have a different theme that really exemplifies the beauty of Jesus' greatest commandment to love one another.

The first station will have stationary, pens, and envelopes. Encourage teens to write a love letter to a parent or family member who sacrifices a lot for them but doesn't always hear it from the teen. Encourage them to focus on the positive attributes of the person they are writing to rather than listing ways they would like that person to improve. If they are willing, encourage them to bring the letter home and place it for the person to find (their bedroom or work bag). If they are too nervous to do that, offer to mail the letter to their house.

At the second station, have the teens brainstorm ideas about the small and large ways we can share love with each other, at school, at home, in the community, and in our world. Create one poster on newsprint or butcher paper with all the ideas.

At the third station, have items available for making hygiene kits to give to a local homeless shelter or day center or sandwiches for a local food bank.

Have the teens rotate through each station. At the end of the gathering, invite teens to share how they were inspired to live Jesus' commandment to love more fully.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
you call your disciples friends not slaves,
as you show them the meaning of selfless love.
May we participate full yin your life this day
by forsaking our will and following
your commands.
Reveal to us this day the way of loving
without counting the cost.
You live and reign with the Father in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.