

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

- [1] CCC 1823
- [2] CCC 1971
- [3] CCC 2822
- [4] CCC 1972
- [5] CCC 1970
- [6] Vatican II, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 8
- [7] Gabriel, *Divine Intimacy*, vol. II, 197
- [8] J. Escriva, *Friends of God*, 223

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# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? John 13:31-35** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## **Gospel Reading – John 13:31-35 – Roman Missal**

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

## **Spiritual Reading**

From a sermon by Saint Maximus of Turin, bishop

*Christ is the day*

Christ is risen! He has burst open the gates of hell and let the dead go free; he has renewed the earth through the members of his Church now born again in baptism, and has made it blossom afresh with men brought back to life. His Holy Spirit has unlocked the doors of heaven, which stand wide open to receive those who rise up from the earth. Because of Christ’s resurrection the thief ascends to paradise, the bodies of the blessed enter the holy city, and the dead are restored to the company of the living. There is an upward movement in the whole of creation, each element raising itself to something higher. We see hell restoring its victims to the upper regions, earth sending its buried dead to heaven, and heaven presenting the new arrivals to the Lord. In one and the same movement, our Savior’s passion raises men from the depths, lifts them up from the earth, and sets them in the heights. Christ is risen. His rising brings life to the dead, forgiveness to sinners, and glory to the saints. And so David the prophet summons all creation to join in celebrating the Easter festival: *Rejoice and be glad*, he cries, *on this day which the Lord has made*. The light of Christ is an endless day that knows no night. Christ is this day, says the Apostle; such is the meaning of his words: *Night is almost over; day is at hand*. He tells us that night is almost over, not that it is about to fall. By this we are meant to understand that the coming of Christ’s light puts Satan’s darkness to flight, leaving no place for any shadow of sin. His everlasting radiance dispels the dark clouds of the past and checks the hidden growth of vice. The Son is that day to whom the day, which is the Father, communicates the mystery of his divinity. He is the day who says through the mouth of Solomon: *I have caused an unfailing light to rise in heaven*. And as in heaven no night can follow day, so no sin can overshadow the justice of Christ. The celestial day is perpetually bright and shining with brilliant light; clouds can never darken its skies. In the same way, the light of Christ is eternally glowing with luminous radiance and can nev-

er be extinguished by the darkness of sin. This is why John the evangelist says: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to overpower it.* And so, my brothers, each of us ought surely to rejoice on this holy day. Let no one, conscious of his sinfulness, withdraw from our common celebration, nor let anyone be kept away from our public prayer by the burden of his guilt. Sinner he may indeed be, but he must not despair of pardon on this day which is so highly privileged; for if a thief could receive the grace of paradise, how could a Christian be refused forgiveness?

### **New Commandment – Lesson and Discussion**

*“I give you a new commandment”*

Jesus before He would give Himself over to be crucified gives the apostles a new commandment. In many ways it is a new commandment, and yet it is also similar to the ones God has already given.

**What is the new commandment?** “Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*. By loving his own ‘to the end,’ he makes manifest the Father’s love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.’ And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.’”[1]

“...This doctrine hands on the Lord’s teaching with the authority of the apostles, particularly in the presentation of the virtues that flow from faith in Christ and are animated by charity, the principal gift of the Holy Spirit. ‘Let charity be genuine...Love one another with brotherly affection...Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.’”[2]

**How is the new commandment not new?** The new commandment is really a summary of all the others commandments. To love God first, but here emphasizes the love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. “Our Father, ‘desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’ He ‘is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish.’ His commandment is ‘that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.’ This commandment summarizes all the others and expresses his entire will.”[3]

**How can we love one another?** We are able to love one another by the Holy Spirit. “The New Law is called a *law of love* because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit, rather than from fear...”[4] The Catechism also teaches, “The Law of the Gospel requires us to make the decisive choice between ‘the two ways’ and to put into practice the words of the Lord. It is summed up in the *Golden Rule*, ‘Whatever you wish the men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets.’ The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the ‘*new commandment*’ of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us.”[5]

The Second Vatican Council says, “Love of neighbor cannot be separated from love of God: ‘The greatest of commandment of the law is to love God with one’s whole heart and one’s neighbor as oneself. Christ has made this love of neighbor his personal commandment and has enriched it with a new meaning when he willed himself, along with his brothers, to be the object of this charity, saying: ‘As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me’. In assuming human nature he has united to himself all humanity in a supernatural solidarity which makes of it one single family. He has made charity the distinguishing mark of his disciples, in the words: ‘By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’”[6]

**Why does this new commandment matter?** As Jesus told His apostles, by living out this commandment they will know they (and we) are disciples of Jesus Christ. “Reciprocal love modeled upon the love of the Master, indeed arising from it, assures the Christian community of the presence of Jesus and is its sign. At the same time it is the badge of true Christians: ‘By this all men will know that you are my disciples’. The life of the Church thus began, sustained by an absolutely new cohesive and expansive force of extraordinary power, because it was not founded on human love, which is always fragile and deficient, but upon divine love: the love of Christ re-lived in the mutual relationships of the faithful.”[7]

**How does this new commandment relate to us?** Saint Jose Maria Escriva said that although this “new commandment” was given 2,000 years ago, it is in a way still new and revolutionary today. “The Master’s message and example are clear and precise. He confirmed his teaching with deeds. Yet I have often thought that, after twenty centuries, it is indeed still a *new* commandment, for very few people have taken the trouble to practice it. The others, the majority of men, both in the past taken the trouble to practice it. The others, the majority of men, both in the past and still today, have chosen to ignore it. Their selfishness has led them to the conclusion: ‘Why should I complicate my life: I have more than enough to do just looking after myself.’ Such an attitude is not good enough for us Christians. If we profess the same faith and are really eager to follow in the clear footprints left by Christ when he walked on this earth, we cannot be content merely with avoiding doing unto others the evil that we would not have them do unto us. That is a lot, but it is still very little when we consider that our love is to be measured in terms of Jesus’ own conduct. Besides, he does not give us this standard as a distant target, as a crowning point of a whole lifetime of struggle. It is – it ought to be, I repeat, so that you may turn it into specific resolution – our starting point, for our Lord presents it as a sign of Christianity: ‘By this shall all men know that you are my disciples’”[8].