

## Fifth Sunday of Easter – Cycle C

May 19, 2019

### Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

First Reading: Acts 14:21-27

Psalm 145

Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-5a

Gospel: John 13:31-35

“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.” -John 13:34 – 35

To our enduring parishioners; to our new found friends visiting today; and to our neophytes, Christ the Good Shepherd as a parish family wants you to know you're golden, loved immeasurably and precious in God's eyes, Welcome Home!

Those of us who love Broadway musicals usually rave over Fiddler on the Roof. One the more memorial scenes takes place when Tevye, the main character (i.e., a peasant Russian Jew with daughters to marry off), realizes that the old ways of arranging marriages are not working.

- ***The daughters want to marry for love;***
- ***As he discusses his daughter's unheard-of demand with his wife, Golde, he asks her, "Do you love me?";***
- ***Golde's response resonates with many of us;***
- ***She does not answer with a simple yes or no;***
- ***She answers like so many of us would do;***
- ***She lists the things she does for him every day, day in and day out, normal things, difficult things, even putting up with his faults; and***

➤ ***At the end, she says, “I suppose so.”***

St. Paul, writing to the Romans, says, “Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.” (Romans 13:8).

My sisters and brothers, we all get it. “Love” as taught by Jesus and the Church is at the heart of our Christian life.

- ***It is the foundation of our Spiritual life;***
- ***It is the basis of our ethical and moral life;***
- ***No one has to interpret what Jesus says, “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” And to even bring more clarity, he continues, “As I love you, love one another.”***

My sisters and brothers, only if it were so easy to love as Jesus loves!

Jesus loves us unconditionally. We generally love with conditions and strings attached.

Jesus shows us how to love. We generally love selectively.

Jesus expresses his love for us by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. We struggle to connect love and forgiveness in real life.

My sisters and brothers, **loving others as Jesus loves is hard**; meeting people where there are, suspending judgement and loving people is difficult.

It is easy to look at real life as it unfolds and describe the realities of hate, exclusion, hoarding, unjust treatments of human

beings, the passion of the earth, hateful words, lies that cover up crimes, homicides and genocides.

Every time we make an examination of conscious, our list grows.

**Even the ones who say they make Jesus the center of their lives** find themselves despising, dividing, lying, cheating, spewing fanciful facts, marginalizing the vulnerable, (the list could go on), in plain sight. **Loving** others as Jesus loves us is hard!

My sisters and brothers, let's be clear, **just because it's difficult** doesn't mean that we are to give up; resort to living in fear and contempt. When Jesus gave us the new commandment to love one another as he loves, he also gave us the resources; the necessary ingredients, we need to love one another as he commands. While we love as individuals, we belong to a community. **You and I belong to Christ the Good Shepherd where are all are welcomed to hear God's Word and feast at this Table where there is no partiality.** I ask you to affirm this Church with your treasures, time and talent. The more we embrace the communities of which we are members, the more connected we are to the whole of humanity, the whole of creation. **One Creator means one creation, and God is our common bond.** The worshipping community, the Word of God, the Sacraments and all of the other sources of grace that surround us is what makes our commitment to love possible.

In the end, you and I can love and must love the way Jesus loves because God has loved us first! Love is our redemption.

Happy Easter Season and remember: JESUS is ALIVE!  
ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA