

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

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.”

*Jn 15:9-17*

Is there still love worth talking about? Our culture and our world are full of opinions, expressions, portrayals, and analyses of love. Every writer, every director, every musician has something to say about love. Everybody has some story to tell: how they know love very well, how awesome love could be, how they have been wounded by love, how dangerous love could be. Everybody is afraid of love, but at the same time everybody holds some hope for this great love deeply hidden in their hearts. The market for reflecting on love is oversaturated. Everybody is talking, nobody is listening — and all are thirsting.

My heart is not much different than the rest of the world. I am afraid of the real thing, so I slip into deception and pretending. Somehow I know others do the same. At the end, none of us will ever admit that we are dying of thirst thinking about the water.

The Gospel of John is written for people who thirst. John’s readers are people who were slaves but now are free, people who were lost in their daily pursuit but now stop and look at their lives with a critical eye: “Was it worth it?” This Gospel is given to those who used to fill their emptiness with so-called friends, living so-called lives based on confused relationships and shallow affections, but now they know that they have to start something new, something real.

What should we do? “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” These words are as subtle and celestial as they are practical. For the exhausted and cynical modern man like me, they offer a vision of God who loves. They are also an instruction on how to make this first step that I’ve been trying to make my whole life.

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” I don’t have to have a lot of property. I don’t have to have talents. In order to make that first step of love, I don’t even have to be a master of my own fate or have the power to decide how my time is used. I can always offer my life for my friends. It’s enough that I exist. I don’t have to be full of ideas. I don’t have to be refreshed by internal confidence or admiration of fans. Even in the driest, deepest, darkest cavern of my existence, I can always offer a gift to the one next to me. I will never be so poor that I would not be able to give myself. I will never be so enslaved that I would not be able to offer myself.

Quite unexpectedly, the risen Jesus offers to me the very definition of humanity. This definition is lit internally with the light of the Father’s love. It makes love itself possible for us sinners and shows us its source in the heart of the Father. The resurrection of Christ truly becomes the resurrection of mankind, the re-education of all people in the meaning of the word “love.”