

Dear Families,

As we do not have Fr. Arthur giving us his great homilies, I will do my best to give you my personal reflection of the Gospel reading.

This week we read from the Gospel of John 14:15-21. In this Gospel, Jesus talks about love and keeping his commandments and sending an advocate, the Holy Spirit. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

I want to focus on the love that Jesus is talking about. There are different levels of love. We often say that we love our neighbors without really knowing who they are. There is also the kind of love we feel for friends, for children, for spouses, and even a type of love we reserve for things like ice cream and back scratches.

The strongest of these loves is Agapé (in greek - ἀγάπη.) Agape love is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. It is the highest of the four types of love in the Bible. Agape speaks of the most powerful noblest type of love: sacrificial love, it is an act of will. This is the love that God has for His people and that prompted the sacrifice of His only son, Jesus for our sin. Jesus was Agapé love personified.

The love that God shows for us is a love without bounds...Agapé. Our God is the one who when we have gone astray from God, He sent prophets to call us back to Him. It is thru this love that God sent us His Son. Jesus is our teacher and savior who tells us that love is not reserved for the powerful but is also for the least of the children of God.

Billy Graham defined Agapé as selfless love...the love God wants us to have isn't just an emotion but a conscious act of the will—a deliberate decision on our part to put others ahead of ourselves. This is the kind of love God has for us.

Jesus in this Gospel also tells the disciples that tragedy awaits him, that one will betray him, and that there will soon be a time where he is not with them in the same way he is now. Jesus tells the disciples that they will not be abandoned by God. They are told that God will send a new advocate that will help the disciples and future generations discern the will of God as new issues and problems emerge. The advocate, the Holy Spirit, will be the voice of God, of Jesus and we will never be alone.

“The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

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