

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“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.”

The Gospel of the Lord. R./ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Commentary

This passage is a continuation of the farewell words from the previous selection. Jesus is at the Last Supper, and prepared to depart from his disciples. Though absent physically, his presence will remain, particularly in the expressions of selfless loving that imitate his actions. The sacrificial love of married couples is like a mirror of the selfless way that Christ loved his friends. This is why marriage is a sacrament and is a path to salvation, because the two are participating in an action of Christ Jesus.

Many couples will embrace the image of laying down one's life for the other spouse. It is tough, and it reinforces the fact that spousal love is to endure until death. This is the action of spouses, and it also the central action of real friendship.

The vocation of all Christians is to be drawn into divine friendship. When believers live as Friends of God, their lives will show it (bear fruit) and they will be encouraged to rely upon that friendship in favorable ways for “whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give you” (v.16). The fruit of the married couple will likely include children who will also be formed to selflessly love and follow Christ's ways. And the family will together call upon God in their need.