

(Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4: 7-10; John 15: 9-17)

In our Gospel from John we heard the words of Jesus as he spoke to his disciples:

As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

He said that if we keep the commandments, we show that we love him. Love is proven by deeds, not just words. He also said: **I have told you this so that my joy may be in you.**

We need to make our religion a joy, not a burden. It seems a good number of Catholics these days feel that life is a “valley of tears.” Jesus insisted that: **His Good News is JOY!**

A wonderful story is told of Pope John Paul II. He was praying one evening over a very difficult problem and was getting nowhere. He finally got up from his knees, looked up to heaven and said: **Dear God, it is your church. I’m going to bed!**

Some questions each of us could ask ourselves are as follows:

- Who is the most loving person I know?
- What is one way in which I could try to be like this person?
- What’s the most dramatic gesture of real love that I’ve ever witnessed?
- At the end of the day, can I recall that I’ve been a loving person that day?

So, we must remember Jesus’ words today:

I tell you this so that my JOY may be in you.

God is the only one who knows what the future holds. He has everything planned. He wants us to trust that he has our best interests at heart. The ups and downs may be challenging, however they may be necessary to teach us some lesson.

God will always be there to guide us through them,

... for God is Love,
and whoever remains in love,
remains in God,
and God in Him.

We simply have to have faith in Jesus, love Him and trust that the one who loves us will also provide for us.

As we all know, **today is Mother's Day**. On this day, we pause and honor all mothers; many of those mothers personify the love of Jesus; they exude comfort and peace. Many mothers, like Jesus, have left their fingerprints all over our lives. They include birth mothers, adopted mothers, foster mothers, grandmothers, aunts, godmothers, mothers-in law, and others we consider to be like mothers.

There is a wonderful children's book entitled: ***I'LL LOVE YOU FOREVER*** by Robert Munsch. This book is about the universal message of peace and love.

This book is about a little boy and his mother; its theme is: whatever the little boy does, his mother will still love him.

The message in the book, and in our gospel today, are very similar.

Jesus is promising joy and love to his disciples, and all of us.

The book begins with a mother holding her new baby. She rocks him and sings a little song. **I'll love you forever.**

I'll like you, for always,

as long as I'm living,

my baby you'll be.

As the years go by, the baby grows. He becomes a toddler and gets into everything; his mother says, "This kid is driving me crazy!" But at night she still sings him their special song: **I'll love you forever...**

The child grows more, he is 9 years old, and never wants to take a bath, and says bad words when his grandma visits. His mother feels like selling him to the zoo. But still at night she sings their song...

"...as long as I'm living, my baby you'll be."

The boy becomes a teenager, and of course, that's the worst! He has strange friends, wears strange clothes, listens to weird music and has gotten a tattoo. His mother feels like she lives in a zoo! But guess what? At night, when he is safely asleep, she still sings their song to him.

Finally the boy is all grown up and moves into his own house. But sometimes on dark nights, the mother drives across town to his house and outside his house, she sings their song.

The years go by and the mother becomes old and sick. She tries to sing to her boy, but she isn't able to finish the song. Her son, however, has witnessed and felt his mother's love. He knows what to do. Holding his mother close he rocks her in his arms, and sings to her.

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
as long as I'm living,
my mommy you'll be.

When he returns home that night, he stands for a long time at the top of the stairs. Then, going into the room where his own new baby daughter is sleeping, he takes her in his arms and sings:

I'll love you forever
I'll like you for always
As long as I'm living
My baby you'll be.

The cycle of love between parent and child begins again.

The love of a mother for her child is only a shadow compared to the incredible love God has for each one of us.

And so, in the midst of honoring our mothers: those who are seated next to us, those who are sick, those at a distance from us, and those who are with God looking down on us, let us listen to the words of our Heavenly Father

I'll love you forever,

I'll like you for always,

For all eternity, my children you will be.

Happy Mother's Day!