

Reflection for the 5th Sunday of Easter

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." John 13:31

Today in our Gospel Reading on this fifth Sunday of Easter we hear in the first five words of this reading that Judas left them. The event that Judas is leaving is the Last Supper, and right before Judas leaves the Last Supper, Jesus said to him, *"What you are going to do, do quickly"* John 13:27. What Judas is about to do is to betray Jesus. It is in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas that a events start to unfold that lead to Jesus dying on the cross for our salvation. Here we are on the fifth Sunday of Easter celebrating the joy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from that dead and Gospel reading this Sunday reminds us of the event that transpired in the upper room that led to the arrest of Jesus and ultimately His death and resurrection. Judas had a key part in the arrest of Jesus that led to His death and resurrection. Because of this key part that Judas had in the arrest of Jesus that leads to His carrying of the cross, it is natural to see Judas in a poor light. Judas is not the only one at that Last Supper that fell short. Simon Peter, when in the courtyard of the High Priest, denied he even knew Christ not once but three times. We of course know what happens at the third appearance of Jesus after His resurrection, on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias. It was at this third appearance that Jesus asked Simon Peter if he loved Him, three times and every time Simon Peter responded that he loved Him. Simon Peter repents of his denial of Jesus, but Judas does not repent of his betrayal of Jesus.

What is it that enables Simon Peter to repent and start anew in his relationship with Jesus, enabling him to be the first Pope? The answer to this question is found in the words that Simon Peter spoke to Jesus on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, *"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you"* John 21:17. Simon Peter embraced the forgiveness of God and a new beginning because of his love for Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus speaks about at the Last Supper after Judas left when He says, *"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you. So, you also should love one another"* John 13:34. It is love that makes all the difference, not just the love that God has for us, but it is the love that we have for God. It is clear that God truly loves all of us, but He has given us free will. Simon Peter chose to embrace God's love and respond in-kind. It was on shores of the Sea of Tiberias that he experienced the forgiveness of God. Judas choose a different path that did not lead him to experiencing the forgiveness of God.

It is love that changes everything, without love where would we be? Well, the answer is nowhere, for it is through love that God created the world and sent His only son into the world for our salvation. It is through our love of God that we can look forward to God's loving forgiveness and the hope of eternal salvation. This love that changes everything is not any kind of love, but only the highest form of love. This love is clearly evident in Jesus giving His life for our salvation. This love is also present in the act of every martyr giving his or her live for the Gospel message. The love that God has for His Church the love that martyrs have for the Gospel message is what the Greeks would call *agape*. This Greek word is often defined as unconditional love. There are eight Greek words for love, *eros*, *philia*, *agape*, *storge*, *mania*, *ludus*, *pragma*, and *philautia*. In our Gospel reading this Sunday it is the *agape* love that Jesus is speaking about. When the word *agape* is translated into English it is sometimes translated into the word *charity*, knowing this fact can help us better understand the meaning of the word *agape*.

The final sentence of our Gospel Reading this Sunday is, *"This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"*, John 13:35. The world has been changed and transformed by two thousand years of followers of Jesus Christ embracing His message and loving one another. It is this love that has changed our lives and continues to change the world. It is also this love for God and each other that enables followers of Jesus Christ to look forward to eternal Salvation. So, in the Easter Season as we embrace the resurrection of our Savior, may we love one another, and look forward to eternal salvation.