**Easter 6 B** **Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS and Joan Blossom**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| The readings focus on the love of God. This does not mean a love of or for God that I personally might have or that we say we have communally. It is only that God is love, and that God loves us. This love belongs to God alone. The Bible does not speak of our love of God, but rather that the love of God means the unique and holy love that belongs to God and is from God alone. God is love, and we humans in our shattered state of sin are incapable of having this sort of love without this grace of God who shares His love with us. The attitude of Peter toward Cornelius was in no way something that Peter had within himself, but rather was given to Peter in a dream. The psalmist announces the breath and scope of this love, and John’s letter gives us the definitions of this love. The new commandment of Christ at the Last Supper invites us to live and practice this love. Find the instances of the vision of this love in personal life and in the shared life of your parish community. Celebrate this with people and praise God for it. |

**FIRST READING: Acts 10, 25-26. 34-35. 44-48**

The deleted verses have Cornelius repeating the dream story from his perspective and the second set skips Peter’s kerygma, which we should know well in any event. When Peter enters the house of the Roman Centurion Cornelius, the history of the Church acquires and fulfills its universal mission and quality. We also see the very close connection between Baptism and Confirmation in the Holy Spirit.

**Vs. 35: CCC 761** The Church’s formation is God’s response to the disorder introduced by sin. The human family has a place to unite. Peter sees that the God fearing and just person of every nation is worthy of God’s calling together.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What does it mean that the Church is called “Catholic”?  Why does the Church exist? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | God shows no partiality. In a culture of many prejudices, where do you stand?  Name the gift of the Holy Spirit that you offer to the Church and explain. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What do you make of the fact that the Church is growing so much in other parts of the world, but not in the US?  Who is responsible for the mission of the Church? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why do we need the Holy Spirit to worship well and correctly?  In the homily, do notice the presence of the Holy Spirit? How and why not? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 98, 1. 2-3. 3-4**

The universal effects of God’s covenant appear in the prophets and in the psalms. This psalm of praise celebrates joyfully the universal work of God’s salvation. It is no longer for the people of Israel and the Mosaic Covenant, but for the nations and the whole of creation to rejoice in a new song. But what exactly is the “victory of God” announced in this psalm? It is precisely the ingathering of the nations back into one family, as we were before the chaos of sin. In a world torn by racial strife at every level, the Church should be first and foremost in holding and proclaiming this vision of God’s universal salvation, which occurs when God will govern the world and all the peoples. We already should be able to see clearly our own failures at just government and a just world order. Without God, we have been powerless and ineffectual in bringing this about ourselves.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is God’s plan for the human family and the entire cosmos?  How will God bring this plan about? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Vatican II brought the Church a new understanding of its fundamental mission. How has this changed your life?  Where do you see the saving power God at work in the world today? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What responsibility do you carry for the universal mission of the Church?  Lots of us sing in the shower, whistle down the street, do karaoke in the car. Has your neighbor heard you singing this new song of God’s universal mercy and love? |
| **WORSHIP** | How are you with the quality of the music in your parish church? Share your level of participation in the hymnody of the mass.  Vatican II insists upon “full and active participation in the Mass”. What can we do to make this a reality in our parish for everyone present? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: I John 4, 7-10 “God is Love”**

The word here is αγαπη and not ερος. In other words God is not some mere feeling aroused by the senses. God is self-sacrificing love. In our culture, this sort of love is very rare; we are a culture awash in erotic love, that ultimately is neither satisfying nor sustainable. We have feelings, and that’s about as deep as it goes. To that extent, agapic love is foreign to us. It is time to re-introduce this vocabulary, without any of the glucose of feelings and eros. Agapic love has the qualities listed in the CCC. John’s text stresses this foundational truth for the disciple, but further expresses a sort of surprise that God has loved us. The self-emptying quality of Jesus, expressed in the great Christological hymn in Philippians, gives us the template of this divine love. Once I saw graffiti in Moscow, spray painted on a wall, “God is love.” I realized what a dangerous thing that was to say, think, and practice in life.

**Vs. 8: CCC 214, 221, 733, 1604** God is He Who Is, “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” God is truth and love. “God’s very being is love,” the quality of this love is “steadfastness” and “everlasting”. Relate this text to Romans 5,5, the spirit poured out into our hearts. The human person is created out of divine love and is therefore called to love, which is fruitful and creative love.

**Vs. 9: CCC 458, 516** This first teaching clarifies that the love spoken of is God’s love for us. Jesus reveals that God is love when he speaks of his intimate relationship with the Father.

**Vs. 10: CCC 457, 604, 614, 620, 1428** Jesus comes to reconcile us to the Father and undo the effects and power of sin in our lives. All the negatives about our shattered human state called out to God and invited God’s mercy and love for us. I John 4, 10. 19 explain the nature of this love. The unique sacrifice of Jesus reconciles back into the circle of God’s love. We are called to conversion into this love through the work of the Church. This conversion itself is a work of God, for it is impossible on our own because we are made powerless in sin. The contrite heart itself is a heart first moved by God, the Holy Spirit.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does John teach us that God is love?  What is the nature of this divine love? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share an experience of agapic love in your life.  Distinguish mere feelings and this kind of deeper love. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Feelings are often our judgments about ourselves or our neighbor. How do you view yourself and your neighbor in light of this sort of divine love?  Relate John’s theology here to the gospel today. |
| **WORSHIP** | What is the purpose of our worship in light of John’s teaching?  Why is the love of the Father expressed in the Eucharist a perilous thing for us? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 15, 9-17 The Love Commandment**

This gospel follows immediately after last Sunday’s Vine and the Branches discourse at the Last Supper in John. The great love commandment is the core of this passage.

**Vss. 9-10: CCC 1834** “The human virtues are stable dispositions of the intellect and the will that govern our acts, order our passions, and guide our conduct in accordance with faith and reason” There are five cardinal virtues and three evangelical virtues.

**Vs. 9: CCC 1823** Charity is the new commandment that we are challenged to abide in.

**Vs. 12: CCC 459, 1823, 1970, 2074** When we accept the yoke of discipleship, we commit ourselves to learning from Jesus and imitating Jesus is our model in loving. Love is the new commandment, and it is decisive in our discipleship. The branches bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The coin of the economy of God’s kingdom is love that empowers us, not our own selves.

**Vs. 13: CCC 363, 609, 614** Soul refers both to the whole human person and the inmost part of the human person, our most worthy part. It is the “spiritual principle” in us. Jesus’ love is the self sacrificial love that lays down its life on its own power for the sake of the other. Refer to the second reading for 614 .

**Vs. 15: CCC 1972, 2347** The law of love frees us from enslavement to our passing and impermanent emotions and from the rigidity of the law. We come to act according to the promptings of charity. Charity blossoms in friendship, a great good, leading to communion. Gender has nothing to do with this.

**Vss. 16-17: CCC 2745** Prayer and the Christian life are inextricably bound is love that renounces the self in imitation of Christ. Prayer and love both conform us to Christ.

**Vs. 16: CCC 434, 737, 2615, 2815** God’s holy name is manifest in God’s power of the resurrection. The mission of the Holy Spirit is the formation of the communion of the Church. The Church and her communion shows forth a new reality in the Spirit and in Christ. The resurrection is the seal of God’s love for us humans. The presence and promise of the Holy Spirit matures us in the prayer of Jesus. The name of God in whom we pray is holy, which calls us into a life of holiness.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Name the cardinal and evangelical virtues.  What is the mission of the Holy Spirit, and thereby, the Church? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Distinguish charity from feelings in your life.  Do you know what joy is? How has this joy of Jesus been present in your life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How does the CCC here view friendship?  For whom would you lay down your life? |
| **WORSHIP** | How does communion bring about the mystery of the vine and the branches?  The holiness of this love prepares us for Eucharist. In what way is our love holy? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Ascension: Acts 1, 1-11; Ps 47; Ephesians 1, 17-23; Mark 16, 15-20**