

Remain in My Love (John 15:9)

Lectio Divina of the Sixth Sunday of Easter B

Leader: Opening Prayer: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, Thank you for your generosity in giving us your Son Jesus the generous lover and giver of our life on earth and eternal life in heaven with you. He goes out continuously searching for us and offering us His infinite love through his words in the Holy Mass and the teaching of the church and through people and events although at times due to our limitations, we are unworthy and ignorant of his love. Continue to guide us as we are going to spend this moment for Lectio Divina so that we may be able to transform our lives and bear fruits in your kingdom.

First Reading: A reading from the book of the Acts of the Apostles 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being." Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)

Commentary: One of the early Church's first struggles was to decide whether God was calling the early Christians to be a sect entirely within Judaism, or one that welcomed others who believed in Jesus. The decision to put pressure on the Jews and the Gentiles together was a tough one for the Judeo-Christians. We see the start of the unifying process. Peter and the Roman centurion Cornelius (a good pagan), are given interlocking visions. During his meeting with Cornelius, Peter made a speech giving Cornelius and his pagan household and friends the assurance that everyone "who fears Him is acceptable to God" and "God shows no partiality." As they all received the anointing of the Holy Spirit while listening to Peter's preaching, Peter ordered them to be baptized then and there. Peter teaches us that God shows no partiality in His love and that there are no boundaries to abiding in love. God loves everyone, both the Jews and the Gentiles, and He wants everyone to be saved through His son, Jesus. That is why God welcomed the Roman centurion Cornelius as the first non-Jew to become a Christian.

Responsorial Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds;
His right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.
R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

The Lord has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel. R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God.
Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; break into song; sing praise.
R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

II Reading: A reading from the first letter of St. John 4:7-10

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. (The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)

Commentary: In the second reading, John defines God as love and explains that He expressed His love for mankind by sending His son to die for us humans "as expiation for our sins." This Divine love gives us the command as well as duty to love one another as we have been loved by God. Since God has loved us first, we can and should love God in return, love ourselves properly, and love one another.

Gospel Reading: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John 15: 9-17

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. 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. This I command you: love one another." (The Gospel of the Lord/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ)

Meditation: How to remain in Jesus' Love and participate in His Joy? We remain in Jesus' Love by remaining in Him through prayer, by following his new commandment of love, by being rooted in His mystical body, the universal, local, parish and domestic church. How to

participate in his joy? When things are going well, we feel elated. When hardships come, we sink into depression. But true joy transcends the rolling waves of circumstance. Joy comes from a constant relationship with Jesus Christ. When our lives are intertwined with his, he will help us walk through adversity without sinking into lows and manage prosperity without moving into deceptive highs. The joy of living with Jesus in our daily life will keep us level-headed, no matter how high or low our circumstance.

Love each other as I have loved: we are to love each other as Jesus loved us and he loved us enough to give his life for us. We may not have to die for someone but there are other ways to participate his sacrificial love: Helping, Giving, Listening Encouraging, Participating in someone's life. Where there is love, there is God.

Jesus calls us friends: Because Jesus christ is Lord and Master, he should call us his servants. Instead he calls us friends. How comforting and reassuring to be his chosen as Christ' friends. Jesus made the first choice - to love and to die for us, to invite us to live with him forever. We make the next choice- to accept or reject his offer. Without his choice, we would have no choice to make.

Let us cultivate an abiding and loving friendship with Jesus: As a friend, Jesus has trusted us by sharing with us everything that he has heard from his Father. By calling us his friends, Jesus makes us equal to him. As an understanding friend, Jesus is ready to forgive us time and time again inviting us to forgive those who offend us. The most effective way of communicating Jesus' love to others is by treating everyone as a friend, giving each the respect he or she deserves as a human being, God's creation. In moments of trial and stress, when people are hostile or ungrateful and we feel the pull of bitter resentment in our hearts, it is important for us to remember that Christ's own love was not limited to the people he liked. Hence, we should close our minds to thoughts of revenge and show the pure love of Jesus. We did not choose him but He has chosen us to bear fruit in life. Our discipleship comes about by Divine choice, not by our merits and actions. The outcome of his choice is our ability to go out and "bear fruit," bear abiding fruit. If we are tinted with Jesus in love and friendship, then our lives will be filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit: **Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self Control, Chastity.**

Concluding Prayer for the Bible Study and Lectio Divina: Lord Jesus, Thank you for this evening and the time to be with our spiritual family. Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. May the things that you have revealed in our Bible study and the thoughts that we have shared in the Lectio Divina dwell in our hearts and stir us to action in the days to come. Help us to share your love with everyone that we encounter this week. May we lavish your abounding goodness upon our families, friends and colleagues. May we be your hands and feet to the needy and homeless, source of comfort and encouragement to the oppressed and the lonely. Give us serene and restful sleep. (Hail Mary/ Blessing)