

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Year C
May 19, 2019

Acts 14:21-27
Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13
Revelation 21:1-5a
John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Assembly

(An unlit candle, a Bible opened to this week's gospel and a vase of roses rest on a cloth-covered table in the meeting place.)

Beginning Prayer

(The candle is lit. Members form a circle and join hands as they silently focus on God's presence. Following a short time of reflection, members alternate reading the following prayer aloud. After the prayer is read, members add personal intentions.)

All: I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

I: The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

All: I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

II: Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

All: I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

I: Let them make known your might to the children of Adam,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

All: I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

LISTEN TO THE LORD

(The scriptures are read aloud with a pause after each reading. After the gospel is read, the leader invites members to choose a few words from the gospel that touch them.)

The leader asks these two questions with a pause between them: “What does this gospel say to you?”, “How does this gospel affect you in your life?” The community silently reflects on these questions. The leader invites members to share their thoughts about the Insights and Reflection Questions for the week in a single group or within smaller groups.)

Insights

Besides the gift of life, love is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. With God’s grace we are able to give love to those we care about and also receive love from those who care about us. Love can help bring out our best attributes. Having love in our lives can make us happy, silly, energetic, generous, open and engaged. It can allow us to be better people than we would otherwise be without it. Love brings out our best selves. For many of us, experiencing love can change our lives, such as when we meet the person we eventually marry or when we bring a new baby into the world. When we have this type of love in our hearts it may be difficult to remember what our lives were like without it.

In his letter to the Corinthians Saint Paul tried to impress on early church members the importance of love. He teaches that all earthly riches are empty and useless if we do not have love in our lives.

“If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.”

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Jesus’ commandment this week shouldn’t be a difficult one for us to put into practice but it can be harder than it seems. He asks us to share our love

with others like he has shared God's love with us. God loves us unconditionally and he is asking us to love others the same way. This can be hard because we have to put our own needs and wants aside. We must subjugate self and put others first. Unfortunately, human love may not always be selfless. Sometimes we may put conditions on our love. We may want the recipient of our love to 'earn' our affection. We may perceive some people as more deserving of love than others because of the way they treat us or because they have personality traits that we think are admirable. This is why we may need the Holy Spirit's help to demonstrate the love that shows that we are true followers of Jesus.

True love is a gift; it has no price. It doesn't cost anything to love and support each other. It may only require a kind word when another needs to hear it, an encouraging smile when another is frustrated, a hand that reaches out to grasp another when they are down, or a warm hug on a cold day. It's very simple, we just need to do it.

Reflection Questions

- ◆ How has having God's love in your life improved it?
- ◆ What types of struggles would a person with no love in their life have?
- ◆ When has having love in your life made a difference? How?

Suggestions for Action

- ◆ Show kindness to a stranger whose body language indicates they are not having a good day.
- ◆ Get involved with an organization in your community that helps young people who are being bullied.
- ◆ Strike up a conversation with a person you don't know standing next to you in a line or sitting next to you in an office. Ask them about their life.
- ◆ Consider becoming an organ donor. Go to www.organdonor.gov to find out more.

HEAR THE LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing, the leader poses these questions: "How has the sharing from this session affected you?", "How will it change you this week?" The leader allows a moment for members to reflect before inviting them to share their thoughts. The leader reads a selection from the

readings aloud. Following the reading, the leader poses these questions to the members: **“What is Jesus saying to you?”**, **“What is your response?”** The community pauses to reflect on these questions. A brief instrumental selection may be played during this time. After a time of reflection, the leader invites members to share what they hear Christ saying to them.)

Closing Prayer

(The leader plays the song “Gift of Love” found at www.insightsbooks.com. Click on the Music link and select the appropriate week. After the song is complete, several members pray as follows.)

God’s Love

- I: God’s gift to man
 is given freely.
 He shows us love,
 cares for us deeply.
- II: It’s easy to give
 and to receive.
 Open our hearts
 and minds to believe.
- III: When we are hurt
 or filled with sorrows.
 God is there
 for all our tomorrows.

(The leader hands one rose to each member of the community. Members exchange a sign of peace. The candle is extinguished.)

