

Pastor's Letter

May 5, 2024—6th Sunday of Easter

Dear Church Family,

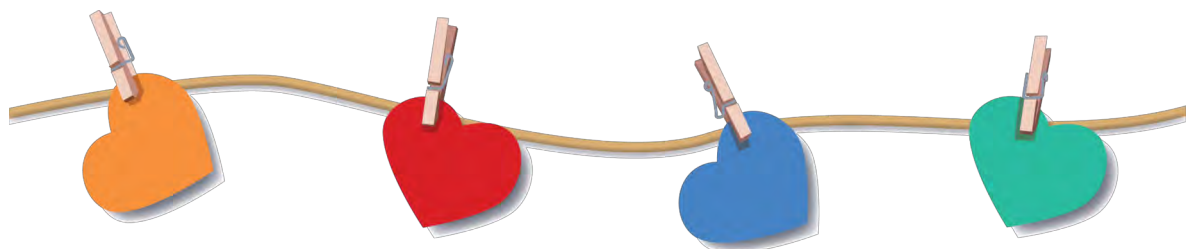
In our first reading for today, Peter and the other Jewish disciples who were with him are amazed when the Holy Spirit is poured out on a group of non-Jewish people who have just heard the good news about Jesus Christ. In this event, God shows the church that it must continue to do what Jesus did throughout his ministry, namely, go to outsiders and bring them into the circle of God's love. Jesus did that for those who were on the edges of the Jewish community. Now the church is to take God's invitation of love to every corner of the world, to every tribe and nation. There could be no denying it. What the Holy Spirit did for the disciples at Pentecost was repeated for the Gentile household of Cornelius.

This was a big step in the life of the church, and it did not come about without controversy. There were those in the church who felt that one had to observe the law of Moses before one could become a follower of Jesus. But Jesus had said that he came to fulfill that law by condensing it down to its purest form: love. When asked to say which was the most important commandment, he said there were two; love God with all your heart and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. In our Gospel reading for today he says, "This is my commandment: Love one another, as I love you." John opens up this command for us in our second reading, "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."

Love is not just what God does; it is who God is. If we want him to share his life with us, then we must become love as well. And we can't just love the people we are comfortable with and who love us first. God loved us before we knew him. God loved us even as we hung his Son on a cross. As shocking as that is, that's how God loves and that's how God asks us to love. Peter and the first disciples found a way to open their hearts to people who were different from themselves and who they had been taught not to associate with. May God work in our hearts to help us do the same.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott



Love each other as I have loved you.