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**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MAY 8-9, 2021**

Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Gospel reading (Lectionary 56)**

Jn 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.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* Love isn’t a feeling; it’s an action!
  + Love is proven especially in sacrifice, in giving when it’s tough
  + “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”
  + Christ points out this connection between love and action
  + “If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love.”
* Possible because we’ve already been chosen
  + It seems like an impossible task; to love as God loves
    - And for man alone, it is!
  + But it is possible because we’ve already been chosen by God; we’re already “in his love”
    - “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.”
  + Christ loves us *as the Father loves Him*. We should reflect on just how awesome and amazing and infinite this love is.
* Let’s love confidently
  + Confident that Christ equips us
  + Confident that this is the path to true happiness, to our joy being complete
  + So many opportunities to do so, including supporting our Annual Appeal
* Happy Mother’s Day to all the mothers!

**Intercession**

That, inspired by Christ’s command to love one another, we might generously support the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

There are a lot of ideas out there about what it takes to be happy: earn a certain income, have certain experiences, achieve certain things. In today’s Gospel, Christ presents us a vision of happiness that is wildly counterintuitive to our contemporary, individualistic society: “love one another.”

Jesus reveals that we find ourselves only by giving ourselves away. This is because we are made for relationship, not self-indulgence. Christ tells us that there is no greater love than to “lay down one’s life one’s friends,” not in an effort to scare us, but so that his joy may be in us and that “your joy may be complete.”

So how do we live out this self-giving love? Most of us aren’t called to be missionaries in foreign lands, or to completely devote our lives to caring for the poor or sick. Yet opportunities to lay down our lives for others abound. One simple way? Support our ongoing Annual Diocesan Appeal. Your offering will directly contribute to our ability to share the love of Christ with a world in desperate need, truly producing “fruit that will remain.”

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

Looking for an opportunity to “lay down your life” for your friends? Well, don’t overlook our Annual Diocesan Appeal. This is a concrete way to make a difference in our parish community, and to truly produce fruit that will remain. Consider contributing today.

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Mother/daughter

Text: "Faith in action is love, and love in action is service. By transforming that faith into living acts of love, we put ourselves in contact with God Himself, with Jesus our Lord." - Mother Teresa

Copy: Thank you for putting your faith and love into action by supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal.