

Sixth Sunday of Easter

John 15: 9-17

The Gospel reading today is part of the Final Discourses of Jesus before he was to suffer, die, rise from the dead and return to the Father. What an encouraging and loving message Jesus has for us; 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.' : 'I have told you thisso that your joy be complete.' : 'You are my friends.:' 'I chose you.' : 'The Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.' We are left in no doubt about how Jesus loves us. He wants us to imitate him in the same way.

Divine love comes to us in three stages. It all begins in the Father's creating of life. God created us in order to show us love. The second stage of divine love is the showing of God's love to us in the life of Jesus. He loved us to the end and then assured us that there was no end to his love. The third stage of divine love is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who implants God's love in our souls so that we might pass it on to others.

And so, at the end of this section of his teaching, Jesus sets a challenge, or perhaps a requirement, for disciples; 'what I command you is to love one another'.

The stages of Divine Love can be summed up; Love begins with God the Father; it is shown to us in Jesus Christ; and it is implanted in us by the Holy Spirit.

But this love for one another which Jesus commands needs to be practical. God -talk is empty unless it is translated into God -action. In St John's teaching what Christian life is all about is letting God act through us. And the only proof of true God-action is the fruit of Love. Our call by Jesus to be his disciples, our entering into his friendship and the rewards we are promised in today's Gospel are all based on the quality of Love. We pray that we might fully believe this and "remain in my love"