

# Rathfarnham Lectio Divina Group

All welcome Thursdays at 7.30 in the Parish Centre

*Reflect, meditate and pray, on each Sunday's Gospel*



## Fifth Sunday of Easter 18th May 2025

**John 13:31** When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' <sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

### INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The commandment to love God and your neighbour, taken from the Hebrew bible, is given by Jesus in Mark 12 as the "greatest commandment." Our text today reflects the reception of this tradition in the Johannine community and literature, where it receives a unique profile.

### KIND OF WRITING

In the Fourth Gospel, chapters 14-17 belong to the literary genre of the final speech of the hero, his or her last will and testament. The farewell speech is well-established as a literary genre in the OT.

The common situation in almost all of these instances is that of a prominent person who gathers his followers (children, disciples, or the entire nation of Israel) just before his death or departure to give them final instructions, which will help them after he is gone. In our passage, Jesus speaks of his death (glorification in this Gospel) and how the "little children" are to love one another after he has gone.

### God's 'glory' (v.31)

Jesus, the agent of God's final salvation, has been lifted up on the cross and in the lifting up, God's own 'glory', his loving inner self was revealed.

### The 'new commandment' (v.34)

It is old in its form. It is new in the Christian dispensation, because of the radical depth of love shown in Christ, which also makes the commandment (newly) possible in an absolutely new way. The tiny expression "just as" is vital here. As elsewhere in this Gospel (20:21), it means more than "on the model of Jesus"; rather, by means of Jesus' loving us or on the strength of Jesus' love, we are enabled to love as he loved.

### Thought for the day

According to the song, "the greatest thing you'll ever learn is to love and be loved in return." In our better moments, we all know this to be the truth about our human being. For believers, it is no surprise that the very thing we need most stands at the centre of the Christian faith: God is love. The match between our need and God's disclosure is perfect. If we took that really to heart, many things would change: our practice of prayer, our relationships, our joy in believing, our way of sharing our faith, our living of discipleship. All we need is love. The astonishing servant love of God in Jesus is exactly we most need.

**KIERAN O'MAHONY** – [tarsus.ie](http://tarsus.ie)

This gospel is all about encouragement. All of us from time to time need to know that we are not on our own, and we need also to be reminded that any words of encouragement that we can find for another are rarely wasted. Even though it appears at first sight that evil triumphs nothing could be further from the truth for on the cross Jesus reveals the glory of God who has 'loved us to the end.' This is why the commandment Jesus now gives is so important. The disciples must love one another in the way that Jesus has loved them. This is what his life's work has been: to draw the disciples into the relationship of love that Jesus shares with his Father.

**SEAN GOAN** – *Let the Reader Understand, Year C*

## POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Judas leaves and Jesus announces that the moment has come for God's power to be made manifest. This is unexpected at a moment of imminent betrayal. Have there been times for you when the power of God was made manifest in strange circumstances?
2. 'I shall not be with you much longer.' Jesus announces a parting of the ways. There are places we have to go in life where others cannot come with us. There are places others have to go and we cannot accompany them. When have you experienced this going on alone as necessary for a fuller life for yourself, or for someone else?
3. Jesus proclaims love as the distinguishing characteristic of his followers. Have there been times when reaching out to others has heightened your sense of walking in the footsteps of Jesus?
4. Who are the individuals or communities whose love for one another and for others has been a witness to you? Perhaps you have seen examples of this during the Covid pandemic, or in the response to the plight of refugees from Ukraine, or from other countries in crisis.

### JOHN BYRNE – *Intercom*

(Fr John recently deceased please remember him in your prayers)

## SCRIPTURE PRAYERS

Lord, there comes a time in life for each of us, as it did for Jesus,

when we have to make a decisions alone:

- to marry;
- to enter religious life or the seminary;
- to run for public office;
- to accept terminal illness.

Often before, we have had to distance ourselves from those who did not love us.

Now we say to those dearest to us that where we are going they cannot come.

Lord, we thank you for the time that we experienced selfless love for someone,

for one of our parents, a friend, a leader in our community.

At that moment it was as if we had understood love for the first time;

we had received a new commandment to love others as we had been loved.

Lord, there is a history of love in the world, so that when we see people who are able to reach out to one another,

we know that they have experienced love themselves.

### MICHEL de VERTEUIL – *Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels, Year C*

## LOVE CONSTITUTES THE IDENTITY OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

What will help test whether a community that calls itself Christian truly belongs to Jesus will not be the doctrine it professes or the rites and religious discipline it observes, but the love it manifests that flows from the spirit of Jesus. It is that love that constitutes its identity.

... Christians have talked a lot about love. However we have not dared to or succeeded in investing love with its true meaning based on the spirit and concrete attitudes of Jesus. We have still to learn that Jesus manifested his love in active and creative ways, which lead him to being always ready to serve and to struggle against all that dehumanises people and makes them suffer.

### JOSÉ A PAGOLA – *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C*

To love as Jesus loved means to see everyone - refugees, members of the Travelling Community, prisoners, friends who have hurt us - through the eyes of our loving God. As always we start with ourselves, acknowledging that we are infinitely loved by God. This can have a domino effect, resulting in an outpouring of God's creative love to those around us, and helping to heal and nourish our world. 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Let us dream of a world where this is a reality, and work towards making it happen.

*We all have circles of influence in our lives, our local networks. Reflect this week on your networks and how you are being called, as a disciple, to love as Jesus loved in these spaces.*

### TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT – *Go Deeper*