

6 Sunday Easter B 2018

May 5

Frazee/Callaway

How do we know someone loves us? It is because they say so but not only that. It is also by their actions. We know someone loves us by their words and by their actions.

A daddy and mommy can work very hard for the sake of their family. They can feed, cloth, protect and educate their children. They can provide for all their needs as an expression of their love. Still the children benefit from hearing the words, "I love you," and experiencing the authentic emotions that can accompany these words.

Likewise, parents can tell their children 100 times a day that they are loved. The verbal expressions of love can become hollow and meaningless unless they are accompanied by authentic actions of love.

The scriptures for this 6th Sunday of Easter are concerned with the integrity of words and emotions and actions.

Jesus said, "You will live in my love if you keep my commandments." In his invitation to a personal relationship with us, Jesus is not merely eliciting from us a verbal "I love you." He desires that we give flesh to the words we speak, to back them up with actions. We love Jesus when we keep his commandments.

Even at Mass, Jesus teaches us that words alone are not enough. We say, "Peace be with you," and then we grasp hands in a gesture of philia—brotherly love. To shake hands is not an empty gesture. It is an expression of affectionate regard; friendship and loyalty. We say the words; then we give flesh to the words by our actions.

At Mass we hear the story of how Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and giving God thanks, he said the blessing and broke the bread. We hear the words of an everlasting love and faithfulness. But then Jesus gives flesh to the words, and he comes to us in Holy Communion. We hear his love, and then he offers us his body and blood here and now.

At Mass hear the words of Sacred Scripture, we share a sign of Christ's peace, we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus; then we are sent.

We are sent not merely to speak the words of faith to the world, but to give flesh to the words of faith. People are to see how we love one another. People ought to hear we love them with words and with concrete signs of mercy.

To love is fundamentally an initiative of God. Jesus said, “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.”

You are chosen and appointed to bear fruit. That is, to love in word and deed.