

May 19, 2019
5th Sunday of Easter
John 13:31-35

When Judas had left, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. (If God is glorified in him,) God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Background:

The gospels for the other Sundays in the Easter Season have focused on the empty tomb or on the disciples' experiences of the risen Lord. This gospel text shifts back in time to before Jesus' crucifixion, when Jesus was celebrating his final Passover with his disciples. It fits into the Easter season because in some sense the glory of God is revealed in the person of Jesus and his willingness to live through the events of the passion and resurrection. Jesus' faithfulness reveals God's faithfulness.

The verses immediately preceding the text for today are: "So Jesus said to Judas, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.' Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, 'Buy what we need for the feast,' or to give something to the poor. So he took the morsel and left at once. And it was night." (John 27b-30)

Judas left the Passover celebration to set in motion Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion. It was as if a leaf that had fallen into a stream was set on a journey down the stream. While it appears as if only suffering and death await, the truth is much larger. The hour of suffering and death is also the hour of Jesus' greatest glory. Jesus is glorified in his willingness to endure suffering and death, and in the ultimate expression of his willingness to surrender to God's will. But at the same time, it is God's ultimate expression of God's desire to be one with us that will not be cancelled or diminished by the prospect of suffering and death. God will not retreat from God's desire to be with us, no matter the cost. God does not intervene to cancel Jesus' passion and death, but instead acts to reveal its meaning.

In verse 33, Jesus addresses the remaining disciples as "my children." This is an affectionate way for a teacher of the time to address his students. As Jesus has acted to make known God's love for them, they are now to act to make God's love present to each other. Jesus will no longer be present among them; therefore, they are each to take up the role of teacher in how they are present to one another.

Reflection Questions:

1. When I think of the things that I have done so that others would be proud of me...
2. When I think of the things that I have done to bring shame to others...
3. Do you recall a time in your life when you realized that the choice you were making at that moment was going to profoundly affect the rest of your life?
4. How does the fact that at this moment Jesus addresses the disciples as "my children" affect how you hear the rest of Jesus' instruction?
5. How has God loved you?
6. Can you take some time now to talk to God about your awareness of God's love for you, the commandment to love others as God has loved you, or some other awareness that rose within you from this text?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to fr.paul.gallagher.ofm@gmail.com.

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fsc-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection

questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Please include this information when printing or forwarding.

Excerpts from the readings for May 19, 2019, the Fifth Sunday of Easter

After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." They appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished. And when they arrived, they called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.
The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.
Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord, and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might.
Let them make known your might to the children of Adam, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages, and your dominion endures through all generations.

Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away."
The One who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Excerpts from Acts 14:21-27; Psalm 145:8-13; Revelation 21:1-5; and John 13:31-35