

May 15, 2022  
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 earlier 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 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 his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. It was as if a leaf, by falling from a tree 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 the gospel, 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. What are some of the things you are most proud of in your life?
2. When did the journey toward those moments begin? What was that journey like?
3. How has your decision to live by the example of Jesus affected the way your life has unfolded?
4. How do you think the decision the early disciples made to become followers of Jesus affected their lives?
5. How does the fact that at this moment Jesus addresses the disciples as "my children" affect how you hear the rest of Jesus' instruction?
6. How do you think the disciples heard it when Jesus told them that where he was going, they could not follow?
7. How do you think they heard his "new commandment" that they should love one another?
8. 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 gospel?

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 [annemarie.lom@gmail.com](mailto:annemarie.lom@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.

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### **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**

### **From Joe:**

Friends,

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for May 15th, the Fifth Sunday of Easter, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. This Sunday will be the fourth in a row (every Sunday in the Easter season so far) where the first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, the second reading is from Revelation, and the gospel is from John. This week's gospel is from John's chapter 13, which describes the night of the last supper, before the agony in the garden. Jesus tells his disciples, "Now is the Son of Man glorified. I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

The other readings also have references to the old order passing away and things being made new in the glory of God's kingdom. In the first reading from Acts, "Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the good news and strengthened the spirits of the disciples wherever they went. They were commended to the grace of God for the work they had accomplished. They reported to the church how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Psalm 145 proclaims, "Let your faithful ones bless you, O Lord. Let them make known the glorious splendor of your kingdom to the children of Adam. Your kingdom is for all ages and all generations" In the second reading, from Revelation, John says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Jerusalem coming down from God. I heard a loud voice say, 'God will dwell with the human race, and there shall be no mourning or pain, for the old order has passed away.' The one who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!