

Homily
Friday of the 5th Week of Easter
May 12, 2023

I Love You! I Love You! I Love You!

Does that sound as awkward as it makes me feel? We don't often tell our friends and neighbors that we love them. Why not? Because it could be taken the wrong way? Because of some social constraint? Because we don't really feel that way?

The reality is that we love each other because God commands us to love each other.

We don't have to say the words to implement love. Love is not a feeling but a decision, an ascent of the will. We choose to love. We show our love by our actions and words. We are kind; we are caring; we say and do things that show our love.

We sacrifice for one another. This means we put others before ourselves. We choose to be selfless. Not at the expense of our own wellbeing, but we, "love our neighbor as ourselves." Matt 22:39

How do we do this in this world of conflict, violence and selfishness? We begin by being kind; we do and say nice things. We avoid doing and saying unkind things. We drive so as to help all drivers get to their destination – we don't drive as if the road were ours alone. We talk each other up – we don't tear each other down. We help others when we see an opportunity – we don't turn our gaze as if we didn't see someone in need.

Jesus further tells us that He chose us. He chose us. We are not worthy of His choosing, yet He chose us. He gives us the perfect example of "love one another." He loves us perfectly, unconditionally, even though others may not seem worthy.

So that is our challenge. Not only are we to love one another, but we are to love one another perfectly, unconditionally. I don't know about you, but I find that probably the most difficult part of this, "Love one another," thing. I'm too judgmental; I'm too impatient; I'm too selfish to love unconditionally, to love perfectly. But that's what we are all commanded to do.

Jesus loves us perfectly. He loves us unconditionally. He gives us the perfect example of, "Love one another." He gives us the grace to love one another perfectly. He gives us His own Body and Blood to strengthen us and encourage us to love one another perfectly. And that is why we continue to come to Mass, why we continue to listen to His Word and receive Him truly and wholly in this Sacrament we are about to receive. This is why we are sent into the world to be Christ for one another. Not just for us gathered here, but for the whole world – for everyone we meet out there: our neighbor, our coworker, our family who may have left the church or were never in it.

"It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you ... This I command you: love one another."