

Homily
Memorial of Saint John of Capistrano
October 23, 2023

“The love of Christ impels us.” Our first reading states very clearly our new life, that we are to embrace God’s love, realize we are in the world but not of this world and that, just as Jesus lived as one of us, died for our sins and rose to new life, we are to follow Him.

God created us because He is love and He loves us. He can’t help it. His love for us is beyond our understanding, so much love. And He knew that we would have to struggle, suffer and die in this world to join Him in heaven. That is His great plan. We aren’t supposed to fully understand it, but we know this because He sent His Son to show us the way.

“So we are ambassadors for Christ.” In spite of our sinfulness, God loves us, Jesus shows us the way and we are Christ for one another. Everything we need to know, Jesus gives us, in His Word proclaimed, in the Sacrament we are about to receive and in His Father’s infinite love for us.

Today, we remember Saint John of Capistrano, a 15th century lawyer, Franciscan friar, priest and soldier. He helped establish several Franciscan communities and most famously led a crusade against the Turks. He was known for his preaching and staunch defense of the faith. He is the patron of jurists.

St. John embraced the love of Christ that impels us. He understood what it means to pick up his cross and follow Jesus. He did not intend his life to go the way it went, but he did so obediently and lovingly.

How are we to embrace the love of Christ that impels us? We could ignore it; we could say no and choose an earthly life. Or we can follow Jesus; embrace the struggles, sufferings and dying to self. Jesus became one of us so that we can be one with Him. Just as Jesus proclaimed the Good News, healed the sick and feed the multitudes, we can look around us and see the need of those less fortunate. We can live our life as an example of the Good News, by what we say, how we act and even what we wear.

Joyce Meyer famously said, “If you are accused of being a Christian, there should be enough evidence to convict you.” I look at myself and wonder if I might be convicted of being a Christian. Am I loving as our Lord is loving? Am I caring as our Lord is caring? Do I love my neighbor as our Lord loves me? Are my actions in line with the way our Lord acted while He walked the earth? Do I build people up or tear them down? Do I take care of myself more than I take care of others?

If we look at ourselves and realize we have room to improve, there’s a remedy for that. If we consider our actions and wonder if we could do better, we have a loving Brother in Jesus to show us the way. Every day is a chance to start again and embrace the love of Christ that impels us. The choice is ours.