

Our Lady of Lourdes

May 2, 2010

Fifth Sunday of Easter/1st Eucharist

Readings:

Acts 14:21-27

Revelation 21:1-5

John 13:31-33, 34-35

Fr. Bob

There are so many things about Christ that to us seem to be a contradiction. In his life, he was constantly reversing what seemed to be the norms of the day. His way of looking at his world, were much different than that of his followers. And it is those contradictions, that form our basis as a people of faith. In our Gospel, in the first line, we have on the surface something that could almost be missed. It's mentioned that Judas had left them. And the consequences were enormous. His leaving would put into play the passion of Christ, that would lead ultimately to his death. For the norm, this would be seen as tragic and the disciples would resist it. Instead, Jesus says, "now is the son of man to be glorified, and God is glorified in him." Judas' betrayal and the ultimate victory of Christ are closely connected. One could not happen without the other.

As the drama of the Gospel unfolds, it becomes clear that the high point of the revelation of God made flesh in the form of Christ is about to be realized and that part of the mission of Christ will be successful. It will take what looks, in human terms to be failure, to be something else entirely.

Christ would be lifted up on the cross, and would be lifted up again at his resurrection. Death, which seemed to be the end, would instead, reveal ultimately the power of God. And it would show, in no uncertain terms, the true love that God has for his people and for the generations to come.

And Christ knew that he didn't have much time and so his words were concise as he left his followers a final message. He gave them a new commandment. In the midst of human treachery, he doesn't call for revenge or hatred. That would have been the norm. Instead, he tells them to love one another. And to make it even more difficult on them, he tells them to love as he has loved them as he prepares to make the ultimate sacrifice because of that same love. And that command of love, would flow beyond that small group of disciples to the entire world as they witnessed to Christ on their own. That loving presence of Christ would be shown by those who came to believe in him and all the things he taught by word and example.

This weekend, we celebrate with fifty five of our young people, that same legacy of love as they prepare to receive the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ for the very first time. At baptism they were welcomed into the Christian family and through the Eucharist they take an important step, in sharing in our long tradition of the love of Christ for his children. It is truly a sacred moment as these young ones take part fully in the love that Christ holds for each one of them. It is an important step as they join the rest of us around the table of the Lord. They have been waiting and they are ready. But we should not forget that commandment of Christ to love one another as he has loved us. These children have been blessed and consecrated by God, and they truly belong to God, but they are not finished. Their faith and their trust in God still needs to be nurtured: it still needs to grow and in the coming years they will need the continued support of families and the church, to show them how great God's love is for them.

Today is not just a one time occasion. It is instead a passage that should sustain them for the rest of their lives. But they still need us, to pass on God's love, to remind them many times, their place in the kingdom. May we continue to support them, to educate them in the ways of faith as they take this important step in their lives today.