



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Prayer

Father, help us to rejoice in Your love, revealed to us by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

## Commentary

### 2nd Reading: 1 John 4: 7-10

Having God is having Love because God is Love.

To those who seek love, they have no need to reach beyond Christ. John says, "God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: He sent his only Son to the world that we might have life through Him.

Jesus is the perfect revelation of God who is love and no other revelation is needed nor possible. In Christ, love is made perfect.

The early Christians experienced the joy of the love of God in the Risen Lord. They were thus compelled to share this love.

Is it possible to claim to have God and to know Christ without loving? While many can claim a faith in the Lord, unless they love, they are just "noisy gongs or clanging cymbals." (1 Cor. 13:1). Their faith is empty.

The First Letter of John says, "Let us love one another because love is of God."

It would be impossible to claim that one has the joy of God in the heart if he or she were unwilling to share the joy of love.

Love can never be contained. It must be shared.

## Question

How is your faith in the God of love expressed through personal acts of love?

**Next Sunday, according to your diocese, the readings for Mass will be taken from the Feast of the Ascension or from the Seventh Sunday of Easter. Keep this in mind when you gather as a group for sharing.**

## Commentary

### 1st Reading: Acts 10: 25-25, 34-35, 44-48

The movie "Into the Wild," tells of a young man who desired to escape the bustle of the world and to find pure joy.

Burning any trace of his identity (driver's license, social security, etc.), the young man finds a place to live in the wild of Alaska. Though at first feeling overjoyed by the peace of seclusion, he slowly finds himself living in despair. How could a man who had found so much joy be depressed?

In the end, the tale of the story reveals that pure joy can never be contained. It must be shared.

In our First reading, the post-Resurrection Jewish disciples of Jesus discovered that the Spirit of God — the Spirit of Joy — was shared by Gentiles as well. Recognizing that they had received the joy of the Holy Spirit, Peter commanded that the Gentiles be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peter recognized the need to share the joy he felt. The joy he found in Christ compelled him to begin the process of evangelization.

Joy can never be contained. It must be shared.

## Question

How do you joyfully share the Good News of Christ in your life?

**Sixth Sunday of  
Easter:  
Let Us Love One  
Another!**

## Commentary

### Gospel: John 15: 9-17

The ancient Greek philosophers were able to discern various forms or types of love. Four types of love were known to the early Christians; including the writer of John's Gospel. They are Phileo, Storge, Eros, and Agape.

Phileo love refers to an affectionate, warm and tender platonic love. It is a love of true friends. Philadelphia (the city of brotherly love) is drawn from this word.

Storge is a kind of family love. It is born naturally and is often dutiful, but strong nonetheless.

Eros is a love that is both sensually affectionate and procreative.

Agape is a self-sacrificing, self-donating love. It is this love of which Jesus speaks when he says, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends."

It is this type of love that we hear of in our Gospel of John today. Agape love is the greatest form of love because it does not expect anything in return. It is the love often proclaimed at weddings: "I promise to love you in good times and in bad, sickness and health ..." And, it is this love that will bring us perfect joy.

Jesus commands us to live in this love — His sacrificial love — so "that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete."

## Question

How joyful are you when you love in a sacrificial, self-donating way?

## *This Week's Task*

This week, consider doing something that brings you joy. Invite another or others to share in your joy.

## Prayer

The leader reads the following from Pope Saint John Paul II on love:

"I propose to you the option of love, which is the opposite of escape. If you really accept that love from Christ, it will lead you to God. Whatever you make of your life, let it be something that reflects the love of Christ. The whole People of God will be all the richer because of the diversity of your commitments. In whatever you do, remember that Christ is calling you, in one way or another, to the service of love: the love of God and of your neighbor."

The group prays together, the following:

Lord of Love, guide us on the path of sacrificial love. Let us love without considering the cost. Help us to imitate your Son who laid down his life for us. Your Love is Joy! Amen.

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 98.

## Psalm

**Response: Alleluia.**

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done wondrous deeds;  
His right hand has won victory for him,  
his holy arm.

**R. Alleluia.**

The LORD has made his salvation known:  
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.  
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness  
toward the house of Israel.

**R. Alleluia.**

All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation by our God.  
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;  
break into song; sing praise.

**R. Alleluia.**

**Conclude with an OUR FATHER**

Love one  
another  
as  
I have  
loved you.