

The Mark of True Discipleship – Love as Christ Loves

In today's Gospel, we witness a moment of profound significance. It is the night before Jesus' crucifixion. Judas has just left to betray Him, and Jesus, knowing His time is short, speaks tenderly to His disciples. His words are not about power, success, or strategy—they are about love. *"Love one another as I have loved you."*

This commandment is not simply an encouragement to be kind—it is the foundation of Christian life. Through today's message, let's reflect on this love, its meaning, and how it transforms us.

Love as Jesus Loves: Jesus does not just command us to love—He defines the way we must love: *"as I have loved you."* How does Jesus love?

- His love is **sacrificial** (*John 15:13*): *"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."* Jesus shows this sacrificial love through His Passion, offering His life on the cross for our salvation.
- His love is **servant-hearted** (*Philippians 2:5-7*): *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant."* Jesus humbled Himself, even washing the feet of His disciples (*John 13:14-15*), demonstrating that true love expresses itself in service, not superiority.
- His love is **forgiving** (*Luke 23:34*): *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* Even as He was nailed to the cross, Jesus prayed for His enemies. This kind of radical forgiveness is part of the love He calls us to imitate.

A Witness to the World: Jesus tells us that this love is our witness to the world: *"By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples."* Love is not just an emotion—it is the greatest evangelization tool. People may not be convinced by theological arguments, but they will be moved by genuine, Christ-like love.

A Challenge for Us Today: If we are to truly live out Jesus' commandment, we must ask: *Do I love others as Christ loves me?* This includes loving those who frustrate us, loving those who think differently, and even loving those who hurt us. It is difficult, but it is **possible** because we do not love with our own strength—we love with the love that Christ has poured into us.

So how can we apply this love practically? Letting our lives reflect Christ's love in everything we do.

- **In our families** – Being patient, forgiving, and present for one another.
- **In our communities** – Serving the poor, welcoming the lonely, and supporting those in need.

- **In our workplaces** – Bringing kindness, integrity, and encouragement rather than negativity.
- **Online** – Choosing words that uplift rather than tear down.

In conclusion, the world is desperately searching for love—but not just any love—it needs the love of Christ, demonstrated in action, forgiveness, and sacrifice.

If we live in this love, our faith will not be hidden—it will be a radiant light that draws others to Christ.

May we love as He loved us. Amen!

Fr. Bula